Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

JULY/AUGUST 1996 ISSUE #60
VOLUME X, NO. 6 $4.95 USA

Letters

Tell us wha t you think of this issue by writing to "Letters," DUNGEON® Adventures, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. You can also send your correspondence via e-mail to tsrdungeon@aol.com.

The art is the key

First and foremost, I would like to say thanks for putting out such a great magazine! It's the best time-saver a DM can have. Second. I would like to applaud a little-praised subject: the art. Over the years, the artwork has gotten better and I must say that it is a boon to the imagination. More times than not I have looked at an illustrated scenario and have come up wth some great ideas to pull on my players, and the descriptions I am thus able to give are points of great enjoyment.

I especially would like to comment on issue #59. The maps are superb, and I really enjoyed the artwork in "Seeking Bloodsilver." Keep John Dollar on as an artist, and you'll keep my imagination going. Kudos on another success.

Nathan Caroland
via e-mail

Let me add my name to the growing list of DMs who highly appreciate your magazine. I would also like to say good job to the artists and cartographers. Sometimes the only way I remember an adventure is by the artwork. You were right in issue #59 when you said not enough credit is given to them.

Is *DUNGEON Adventures* thinking of opening up a Web site on the Net?

Lance L. Sharkey
via e-mail

Thanks, guys.

Lance, you're right about our cartographers and artists. In fact, now that we're working with more than one cartographer, we're going to add their names to the art-bylines in the adventure, so you can tell who's doing which maps. Maybe in addition to favorite writers, people will have favorite artists and even favorite mappers.

There are plans afoot for a TSR Website, I understand, but nothing has been finalized as I write this. Believe me, as soon as there is one, we'll let you all know. TSR has an online presence on AOL. You can find adventures that people have uploaded in the libraries, and some adventures from past issues of DUNGEON Adventures *are even posted there.*

Game stew?

I'm impressed by the AD&D® game stew you people put together.

My small gaming group plays straight AD&D® game rules in my own world, but I've had no trouble dropping AL-QADIM® or BIRTHRIGHT® adventures ("Bloodsilver" rocks!) into my existing campaign. We even fit *Oriental Adventures* (remember that?) in from time to time. All it takes is a different part of the world. If you can travel the planes, you can travel the planet. (We don't use the PLANESCAPE™ adventures, but I'm saving those for a surprise.)

Steve Waterman
Address Withheld

Watch those hints, guys

I just bought issue #58 of *DUNGEON® Adventures* and read the letters page and the introduction sections of each of the adventures. Before I read further, I want to get these thoughts to you.

I somewhat agree with Willie Walsh. (I've read and run a good number of his adventures, by the way, and have never been disappointed.)

I tend to be the only person in my gaming circle to read the magazine, so I've never had the problem of a player reading the adventure blurbs and guessing the crux of the module. I *have* had problems with published TSR modules that I've run in the past. Some scene or aspect of the adventure would be featured on the cover and the cat would be out of the bag. Does it really ruin the fun? For mature role-players, this shouldn't be a problem. Just because the player knows that a lich (or dragon, or what-have-you) is the monster at the end of the module, thanks to a blurb or cover art, doesn't mean his

Continued on page 72

DUNGEON® (ISSN 0890-7102) is published bimonthly by TSR, Inc., 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva WI 53147 U.S.A. The mailing address for all material except subscription orders is DUNGEON®, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva WI 53147 U.S.A.; telephone (414) 248-3625; fax (414) 248-0389.

Distribution: DUNGEON is available from game and hobby shops throughout the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, and through a limited number of other overseas outlets. Distribution to the book trade in the United States is by Random House, Inc., and in Canada by Random House of Canada, Ltd. Distributed to the book trade in the United Kingdom is by TSR Ltd. Send orders to: Random House, Inc., Order Entry Department, Westminster MD 21157, U.S.A.; telephone (800) 733-3000.

Subscriptions: Subscription rates via second-class mail are as follows: $23 in U.S. funds for six issues sent to an address in the U.S., $25 in U.S. funds for delivery to Canada, $45 in U.S. funds for surface mail delivery to any other address, and $59 in U.S. funds for air mail delivery to any other address. Prices are subject to change without notice. Payment in full must accompany all subscription orders. Payment should be by check or money order, made payable to TSR, Inc. or by charges to valid MasterCard or VISA credit cards. Send subscription orders with payments to: TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 5695, Boston MA 02206. The issue of expiration of each subscription is printed on the mailing label for each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscription copies must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change, in order to assure uninterrupted delivery.

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Second-class postage paid at Lake Geneva, WI, U.S.A. and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to DUNGEON, c/o TSR, Inc., 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A.

Editorial

You are holding in your hands a special issue of *DUNGEON® Adventures*. This is issue #60, meaning it is now a cool 10 years since the first appearance of this magazine.

Allow me to interject some personal history. When this magazine made its debut, I was living in Japan. There were very few people to play the AD&D® game with in Tokyo, and I was suffering withdrawl symptoms. Only rarely did an issue of *DUNGEON Adventures* find its way to one of my local bookstores, and when it did, I grabbed it.

Now I get to read each issue — and play the adventures — before it's even published.

The adventures this month are an interesting set.

Randy Maxwell's "Shards of the Day" — a scene of which graces our cover — takes you on a quest into what is supposed to be an abandoned dwarven city to find the various parts of a powerful elvish artifact, forcing you into alliances and various sub-quests to achieve ultimate victory. It would be a perfect side-adventure for anyone running an Underdark campaign. In fact, it could easily slip right into the *Night Below* boxed set.

Our second feature is "Iasc," the Irish-Gaelic word for fish; but the exact implications of that word must be discovered by the adventurers in Willie Walsh's latest campaign.

"Nemesis" is a PLANESCAPE™ adventure that takes you to a poisonous island in the Abyss where you have to battle... ah, never mind. That would be giving it away. Practice your rhebus-reading and set off from Sigil. You don't need to play PLANESCAPE to enjoy this one, though; anyone who can get to the Abyss should have fun. Suffice to say that Chris Perkins has Done It Again.

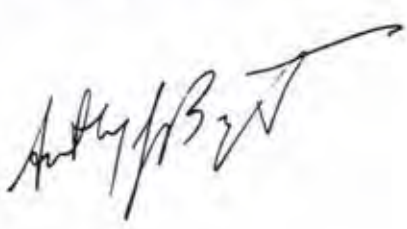
We shouldn't forget this month's SideTrek — "Centaur of Attention," by Johnathan M. Richards — a brilliant little piece in the "now why didn't I think of that" tradition.

Something you *won't* see in this issue is the index for issues #48–60. There was so much good stuff in this issue, we didn't have the heart to cut the modules, and we didn't want to skimp on the index; so you'll get that with the next issue.

Keep your proposals coming, and please forgive us if it takes a little time to get to them. We read them all, and that takes a while.

We are especially interested in unusual adventures and settings that can easily be adapted to a generic AD&D setting. Willie Walsh, for example, makes excellent use of his *Celts Campaign Sourcebook*. That is the kind of "different" adventure that really takes the game out of the ordinary and gives a dose of spice to your campaign.

It is important that, however exotic these settings are, they be playable through standard AD&D game rules; and if you use one of our pre-existing game worlds such as DARK SUN®, or AL-QADIM® try to provide information on how someone can play according to core rules. (An excellent example is "Seeking Bloodsilver," a BIRTHRIGHT® adventure, published in issue #59.)



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Volume X
Number 6

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On the Cover:

Jim Holloway's painting depicts a brave (but not too observant) party of adventurers making an interesting discovery in a scene from Randy Maxwell's "Shards of the Day."

SHARDS OF THE DAY

BY RANDY MAXWELL

Night and day

Artwork by James Holloway
Cartography by Michael Scott

This is Randy's 16th adventure in 10 years. Of his long association with DUNGEON® Adventures, *he says, "There is no better cure for hubris than getting a manuscript back with what you considered a well-crafted encounter marked 'This is stupid' in large, red letters."*

"Shards of the Day" is an AD&D® adventure for a well-balanced party of 5–7 PCs of levels 7–9 (about 46 total levels). A larger group of lesser levels may attempt the adventure, but all should be experienced and well-equipped, and they should expect some attrition. Clerics and others with access to healing are crucial.

This is an Underdark adventure that can take place in any convenient location in the DM's campaign. Also, though it is written as a stand-alone adventure, DMs using the *Night Below* boxed setting may use this module as a side adventure for PCs to hone the dungeoneering and negotiation skills needed in that campaign. A passageway or an entrance leading to the city of Dylvwyllynn can be added easily enough to the Strategic Mid-Underdark Map used in the *Night Below* campaign.

This adventure uses a non-psionic version of the mind flayer (illithid). DMs using psionics in their campaigns may use the monsters as described in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ tome. Also, the adventure does not use a standard city map but instead uses movable map tiles to depict an underground city. The DM should become familiar with the Map of Dylvwyllynn sidebar and the tiles before play begins.

Adventure Background

The PCs are resting, passing through, or looking for adventure in any large city the DM finds convenient. On the second day, a messenger delivers a gold-lettered party invitation to the estate of Baron Rodorigo Enano Casta. The baron is an old, wealthy, and powerful dwarven diplomat known to all (especially those in the inner circles of power). If PCs ask the messenger, innkeepers, or anyone familiar with the local gentry, they are informed that the baron has a reputation for lavish parties wherein guests are showered with gifts and expensive tokens of esteem. Invitations such as this one are much coveted, and the PCs would be considered utter fools not to accept.

The baron is an amiable but shrewd individual. He deals fairly with everyone but drives the hardest bargain he can in any business situation. His mansion lies directly off the main road a mile west of the city and cannot be missed. If a map is required, the DM may use any "mansion" or "estate" map from any source he wishes (back issues of *DUNGEON Adventures* being an excellent source). He keeps no guards nor soldiers at his house and employs only a dozen servants. If attacked, he uses a *ring of invisibility* to elude his attacker.

Baron Rodorigo Enano Casta (known to his friends as "Squint"): AL LG; AC 6; MV 3; P10; hp 22; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by spell (DM's choice); S 8, D 6, C 6, I 18, W 18, Ch 17; ML 15; XP 4,000; *ring of invisibility, ring of protection +4.*

Servants (12): AL any good; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 15; XP 15.

You arrive at the baron's residence to find that there are no other guests. Servants usher you into a richly furnished den and provide refreshments. Soon, the baron enters with a hearty "Well, well, you've arrived!"

He pours himself a drink and settles his stocky dwarven frame into a large, overstuffed chair. He sips his drink and scrutinizes each of you over the lip of the glass. It is hard to decide whether there is merriment, wisdom, or both in the old dwarf's pale eyes.

"You're wondering what in the Nine Hells an old dwarf wants with the likes of you, eh?" With that he rises from his chair and rings a small bell. A servant quickly arrives carrying a long, narrow wooden chest.

The baron continues, "I won't just tell you, I'll show you!" The servant places the chest on a low table, then exits the room. The baron produces a small silver key from his pocket and unlocks the chest. He waits for you to gather around, obviously wishing to make his presentation as dramatic as possible. He whips open the chest, grips an object within and raises it over his head.

"Behold!" he exclaims, waving a sword dangerously near your faces, "the Shard of Dawn!"

If the PCs ask what they are doing here or what is so important about the sword, the baron explains his excitement. The DM may paraphrase or roleplay the following as suits his need.

While usually safeguarding dwarven property rights and negotiating trade deals, the baron has used his spare time to indulge a secret passion. He has spent much of his adult life searching for the *Shards of the Day* (see *"Shards of the Day"* sidebar). The item represents two major concepts to the baron: dwarven power as it was of old and the friendship that once existed between dwarves and elves. He wishes dearly to return this magical item to dwarven hands before he dies. To this end the baron has questioned countless travelers, searched vast libraries, and consulted many sages concerning any and all records, rumors, and tales detailing the whereabouts of the *Shards.* At long last, he has invited the PCs to his home to divulge the results of this long search.

The baron discovered the location of the *Shard of Dawn* (see "The Digs" map). He has been able to ascertain beyond a doubt that the *Shards* were in the city of Dylvwyllynn before its fall.

"Of old, Dylvwyllynn was a magnificent, underground city, but its exact location has long since been lost. The city was damaged in an earthquake and abandoned. Unsavory creatures took up residence there. The constant warfare of the city's new denizens sealed the many entrances to the world of sunlight."

At this point he stops, rubs his hands together gleefully, and looks up at you. His dark eyes are intense and gleaming with hope and expectation. He continues, but with the possibility that the end of his long search might truly be in sight, his voice becomes louder and clearer.

"But now, I have a map to a possible entrance to Dylvwyllynn. And I have you, a brave and resourceful band of adventurers." Here, the baron winks at you and gives a little laugh.

He continues: "Oh yes, make no mistake, I have made inquiries as to your character and the nature of your band. I have done so with many groups of sell-swords and bounty hunters. I would be fool not to, don't you think? There are so many these days who merely take the money and run. So, I have chosen you for my quest. Shall we discuss the matter?"

At this point, he offers each PC a 5,000 gp gem, with the promise of another 50,000 gp in gold, gems, and jewelry to be divided among the party as they wish, should they agree to find the *Shards.* The reward is, of course, contingent on finding the complete magical item. The baron makes clear that the price decreases if only parts of the item are recovered. The reward is 10,000 gp for each piece found. In addition, other than the *Shards,* the old dwarf cares not a whit about any other treasure; the PCs may keep anything else they find.

For the Dungeon Master

The DM may place the Digs in any convenient range of wild hills or mountains. Also, he may handle the journey to the Digs in any manner desired, and the trek can be long and eventful or short and uneventful. As for the area near the Digs, it has few trails and no protection from the unpredictable weather. PCs must scrabble and wander as best they can through the treacherous landscape until they locate the mine. In any case, the trip should not cause the PCs to lose a great deal of equipment or deplete their strength significantly.

Dylvwyllynn

1. The Digs. The Digs is a crude mineshaft following a weak vein of silver deep underground. The vein supplies just enough silver to make further digging seem worthwhile, but it never widens into a true lode. Even the most tenacious miners eventually grow weary and give up. The shaft slopes downward at a 45° angle. The roof is held in place by several flimsy-looking wooden beams and buttresses. There are constant small rock falls but no major collapses.

Occasionally the tunnel makes a slight curve to the left, or it dives down steep stairs, but primarily it just goes on and down, following the silver vein. Any encounters here are with the duergar of area **2.** They do not attempt battle in the Digs but flee back to their citadel to await intruders. (DMs using the *Night Below* may wish to use the Garlstone mines detailed in that campaign instead of the Digs.)

The *Shards of the Day*

The *Shards of the Day* are parts of a powerful magical item consisting of three magical swords and a large, slitted, silver hemisphere. Each sword has an individual name and minor powers, but when all are inserted into the silver hemisphere, the full power of the item is realized. The swords are styled as standard long swords with distinctive bladesk, and each is a +2 weapon with an additional bonus vs. a particular type opponent. The swords' powers are usable once per day and, unless occupying its slot in the silver hemisphere, a sword must be unsheathed and held in hand for the ability to function. The swords and their abilities are:

Shard of Twilight: This blade is multicolored like a sky before sunrise or just after sunset. (It is said that an optimist calls the weapon "Shard of Dawn" and a pessimist calls it "Shard of Dusk.") It is deep purple to almost black at the tip turning to deep blue then light blue to bright yellow-orange at the hilt. The pommel of the weapon is set with a small topaz. Running the length of the hilt and inset with gold is the elder rune *Vakaros* ("The Air"). The weapon has a +3 bonus vs. vampires and energy draining creatures and has *endure heat/endure cold* (as spell) and *chameleon power* (as ring) abilities.

Shard of Noon: This blade glows bright yellow at all times. Its light allows for normal vision in a 10' radius but does not interfere with infravision. The pommel of this sword is set with a fire opal, and the hilt is inset with the elder rune *Laebos* ("Fire"). The sword has a +3 bonus vs. the goblinoid races and has *continual light* (as spell) and *warmth* (as ring) abilities.

Shard of Midnight: This weapon has a deep black blade that seems to have small bright stars reflecting off it. The gold inscription on the hilt is the elder rune *Qualos* ("The Water") and it is adorned with a black sapphire. It has a +3 bonus vs. fire using/dwelling creatures and has *protection from fire* (as spell) and *darkness, 15' radius* (as spell) abilities.

The silver hemisphere is inset with a small piece of amber in the shape of the elder rune *Tergara* ("The Earth"). It radiates a permanent *protection from elementals* (all) in a 10' radius. Its primary purpose is to act as a catalyst to combine the power of the swords. The swords and the silver hemisphere join in some mysterious synergistic fashion and the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. The powers are cumulative, with the item becoming more and more powerful as each sword is added. Not only do the powers of the individual swords function normally, but if a single sword is placed in an opening in the hemisphere, the *Shards of the Day* can *remove fear, cure light wounds, cure blindness or deafness, cure disease*, and *remove curse* or *paralysis* once per day. If two swords are inserted in the hemisphere, then once per week the magical item can *cure serious wounds, cure critical wounds*, and *regenerate*. When all three swords are placed in slits, once per month the item can be used to *restore, resurrect*, or *reincarnate*. Also, when all three swords are placed in the hemisphere, it continually generates *protection from elementals, evil*, and *undead* in a 50' radius, and once per year the item can open a *gate* to any plane desired. The swords need not be removed, and the item need only be touched before any of the powers function.

The sword or swords must remain in the silver hemisphere for the length of time required (i.e., one sword must be placed in the hemisphere for one day before *remove fear* is usable, two swords must be in place for one week before it can be used to *cure serious wounds*, and so on).

History: The *Shards* were created by elves but given to the dwarves long ago for their assistance in one of the many goblin wars. The swords were kept in the royal treasury of Dylvwyllynn and for a time were loaned to powerful warriors as a sign of the king's favor.

It is not clear how they ended up in a treasure trove just gathering dust. It is likely that they were merely in the treasury for safekeeping when the earthquake struck suddenly. What happened after the earthquake is also a matter of conjecture. Sages assume that the vault bearing the *Shards* was probably sealed by the earthquake and was only discovered years later by some burrowing or tunneling creature. (Otherwise they would have been taken by the dwarves when they left the city or looted in the days following the city's fall.)

After their rediscovery, the swords passed from those of lesser strength to those of greater and greater strength, from mold men to beholder to drow, and so on.

2. The Gates of Night.

The thirty-foot-wide and twenty-foot-high tunnel is poorly made, as if someone or something dug a rough passageway in a hurry, with no intention of using it again. As you descend, the tunnel grows wider and higher.

The tunnel's descent ceases and the walls disappear as you step out into the flat expanse of a small cavern. Directly across the cavern the tunnel continues through a great citadel. The front of the fortress is decorated by complex reliefs and fading frescoes of dwarves at war, at work, and at worship. Arrow slits and empty windows glare menacingly from strategic points among the reliefs.

Apparently there were large gates at one time, but now only the great iron hinges remain; however, the tunnel mouth is not completely open. Instead of a gate, a ghastly curtain has been hung across the entrance.

Dangling like marionettes on strings, skeletal remains hang loosely on thick ropes. There are more than a dozen humanoid skeletons.

Climbing the sculpted front of the fortress to inspect the dark windows and arrow slits does not require a Climb Walls ability. Anyone thrusting a light source in a window sees only a wall of rubble and debris, and a sword or pole used to probe an arrow slit is blocked almost instantly by fallen debris behind the opening. It is obvious that the interior of the fortress — or at least the front — has collapsed.

If the PCs inspect the skeletons, they notice that the sketelons are held not by normal ropes but by thick strands of woven spider silk.

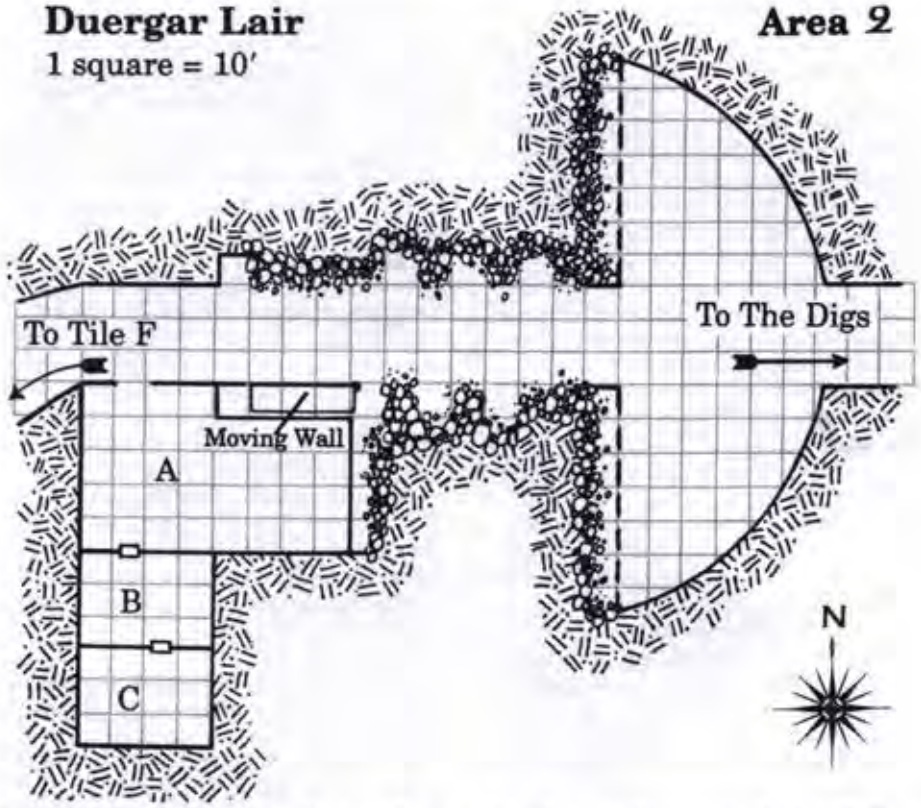
When the PCs pass the skeletons, they enter a 30' × 20' corridor. While the hall is smooth and straight, its walls are cracked and flaking. To the right and left are several side tunnels, but all appear blocked by fallen rubble. The PCs may attempt to dig out these side passages, but it is impossible, as the rock above continues to fall. Excavations prove fruitless, as there is nothing to find beneath the rubble.

The blocked tunnel before the clear one is actually a concealed trapdoor (detected as a secret door). Even if detected, the door cannot be opened from the tunnel side. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs investigate the cleared tunnel:

As you approach the tunnel, something dark and many-legged issues forth. You find yourself facing twelve duergar mounted on grisly steeders. A clatter from behind warns you to look in that direction. Apparently, one of the blocked tunnels behind you is mere camouflage used as part of a trap. The rubble blocking the last tunnel you passed has swung out into the main corridor, blocking your retreat. A score more unmounted duergar stand in the corridor behind you. They are accompanied by five riderless sword spiders.

Some of the steeders have climbed the tunnels' walls and ceiling. The gray dwarves' eyes glitter with malevolence as they watch you from their upright, sideways, and upside-down positions.

One of the upright duergar moves forward slightly. He eyes you deprecatingly for a moment, then leans forward with both arms across the back of the spider's thorax. He speaks clearly: "You are doomed, my little flies. Surrender now and I promise you a quick and easy death."



Duergar (29): INT average; AL LE; AC see below; MV 6; HD see below; THAC0 19 (×24), 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA stealth, invisibility, enlargement; SD surprised only on 1, save vs. magical attacks with +4 bonus, immune to paralysis, illusion/phantasm spells, and poison; SZ S; ML 13; XP 420 (×20), 650 (×10), 1,400; *MM*/96 (Dwarf).

Leader: HD 4+8; hp 23; AC 3; hammer and short sword.

Unmounted Duergar (19): HD 1+2; hp 6 each; AC 4; hammer, pick, and spear.

Mounted Duergar (9): HD 2+4 (×8); hp 12 each; 1 HD+2; hp 6; AC 4; light crossbow and pick.

Steeders (10): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4+4; hp 21 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA sticky attack to hold opponent, the victim suffers –2 to attack and damage rolls and is automatically bitten once per round; SD jump up to 240'; SZ L; ML 13; XP 975; *MM*/326 (Spider).

Sword spider (5): INT average; AL CE; AC 3; MV 6, web 8, climb 8; HD 5+5; hp 25 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2–8; SA leap up to 30' and impale with five legs for 2–12 hp per leg, if leap is 20' or more, each leg receives a +1 damage bonus; SD upward attacks against the spider are at –4, due to the impaling blades that protect the spider; SZ L; ML 13; XP 2,000; *MM*/326, 327 (Spider).

The duergar wait two rounds to allow the PCs to think. Then, with a hoarse shout from one of the duergar, the sword spiders leap to the attack, followed by the duergar on their steeders, then the unmounted gray dwarves. The sword spiders attack like war dogs, dodging in and out to cause what damage they can. The mounted duergar attempt to sweep through, kill quickly, and pursue any who flee. The battle in this corridor is a wild free-for-all, with opponents attacking PCs from front and rear, as well as from side walls and ceiling. Those duergar attacking from the ceiling do so with crossbow or thrown spears. Unmounted duergar employ their *invisibility* or *enlarge* powers to their best advantage.

Mounted duergar either themselves attack or allow their steeders to attack. If a steeder is lost, the rider continues to fight on foot. If any mounted duergar are killed or incapacitated, another duergar climbs into the saddle and continues the mounted attack.

The leader attempts to stay out of the contest and can be found upside-down on the ceiling, directing the battle. His loss does not lower morale, but if all duergar of greater than 1 HD are killed or incapacitated, the remaining duergar flee. The spiders fight so long as they are commanded but if the duergar flee, they abandon the fight. Using captured steeders or sword spiders is extremely difficult. DMs should keep in mind the alignment and disposition of the creatures. The steeder saddles are fitted for those of dwarven stature and are not usable by anyone over 5' tall.

Any captured or surrendering PCs quickly find that the duergar promise of a quick and easy death was tripe. Captured PCs must be rescued quickly or they are tortured for the amusement of the duergar. Captured duergar refuse to talk, so any information must be gathered by *ESP, charm,* or other magical means (remember the duergar's +4 bonus to magical attacks). Duergar prisoners know only their neighborhood well (the map tile in which they are located); none have any information on the *Shards of the Day.* The following may be learned from them:

- Somewhere deep in the city, there is a large lake.
- The city has multiple levels.
- There are drow and kuo-toa within the city.

• There are other wandering bands of duergar, but they are scattered and disorganized.

2A. Common Room. This room is in an extreme condition of disrepair. Its gray walls and ceiling are devoid of ornament but are profuse with cracks. The duergar have patched things up only as much as necessary. Crude stone tables and chairs, as well as dirty pallet-like beds, are scattered here and there. A bag of dirty clothes and several boxes of assorted stoneworking tools rest on the tables and floor. The PCs discover 500 gp worth of dull duergar jewelry if they search the beds. They also see a stone door in the southern wall.

2B. Spider Stable. The room smells of rot and decay and is choked with tattered webs and tangles of spider's silk. Hanging listlessly in the silk are the barely identifiable bits and pieces of long dead victims; a skeletal hand here, a thigh bone there, etc. On the ceiling watching the PCs every move are two sword spiders (hp 24, 27; see area **2** for details). They are left here to guard the room beyond (area **2C**). Due to their location near the ceiling, they are difficult to see, and they surprise PCs on 1–4 on 1d10. If the webs are ignited with a torch or other fire source, the room erupts in flame as the strands of sticky silk burn furiously. Spiders on the ceiling and anyone else in the room suffer 2d4 hp fire damage from burning webs. If the webs are ignited before the spiders attack, they drop to the floor and lose all chance of surprise.

2C. Prisoners.

> The door opens smoothly and quietly in testament to dwarven craftsmanship. The room beyond is dark, but two eyes glitter in the dark interior. They belong to a haggard and starved svirfneblin prisoner. He sees you and attempts to speak, but his tongue is so swollen and his lips so dry and cracked that only unrecognizable noises come forth. He is hanging by his wrists from two slender ropes, his feet swinging slightly above the floor. To his left are two more deep gnomes strung up in the same manner, their heads bowed.

They have been hanging for four days and are in sad shape. If PCs cut them down and give them water, the two unconscious ones rouse themselves and recover enough to stand. The one who was conscious is able to speak more clearly after drinking some water. He identifies himself as Ablund, his two friends as Detek and Inglang. Ablund asks the PCs to help them return to an enclave of his own people not too far from the citadel. If PCs ask about the *Shards of the Day*, the deep gnomes state they know nothing, but that their burrow warden might. They have no weapons or armor and can do little more than plod along. If deserted, only Ablund survives to return home (with his tale of rescue and abandonment). In this case, any of the PCs' future dealings with the svirfneblin are very cool (–6 penalty to PCs' Charisma).

Ablund, Detek, and **Inglang**: AL N(G); AC 10; MV 3 (6); HD 3+6; hp 4 (24), 3 (22), 2 (18), THAC0 17; #AT 0, (1); Dmg nil (by weapon type); SD 20% magic resistance; SZ S; ML 5; XP 420; *MM*/159, 160 (Gnome).

3. Svirfneblin Lebensraum. This area is controlled by the deep gnomes. This particular enclave is a pioneer expedition from a deep svirfneblin city. They are looking for a chance to colonize. (If the DM is using the *Night Below*, the Dylvwyllynn svirfneblin are unaffiliated with and unaware of the deep gnome enclave in that campaign and vice versa). This area gives the PCs a chance to rest, resupply, and gather information. If rescued svirfneblin accompany PCs (from either **2C** or **4B**), the gnomes act as guides to the enclave. To assure themselves that the PCs are not merely using them to penetrate their peoples' defenses, they give no warning of the following:

> The walls begin to narrow. The corridor rapidly shrinks from twenty feet wide to a bare five feet, and you must go in single file. You have the uneasy feeling of being watched.
>
> Suddenly there is the screech of metal on stone, and a grating made of thick iron bars falls into place ahead of you, blocking any advancement. Out of the shadows ahead appears a svirfneblin holding a lantern.

Every entrance into the svirfneblin-controlled area is guarded in this same manner, so the above encounter may be used at any point the PCs enter deep gnome country. If PCs have rescued the svirfneblin prisoners, the deem gnomes wait a moment to determine the PCs' reaction. If the PCs make no hostile moves, one speaks up with "Let me pass, brother. I bring friends!" At this point a deep gnome comes to the grating and inspects the party. When satisfied, he has the grate raised, and the PCs may proceed unhindered. Thereafter, the svirfneblin are cautious but cordial.

If PCs do not have the prisoners and attack what they think is a deep gnome with a lantern, they find it is actually a piece of polished silver reflecting the image of a svirfneblin standing around the corner. Missile attacks clang loudly off the metal, and spells may fail. The mirror has been placed there for this exact purpose by the gnomes. (Because of distance and the quality of workmanship, the PCs have no chance of realizing it is a mirror).

If the PCs attack, the gnomes treat them as enemies. If not, the svirfneblin are willing to negotiate. If PCs attempt to lift the grate, they find they are standing on a trapdoor that is immediately triggered and drops them into a 10′ × 10′ × 10′ pit filled with sharp iron spikes. PCs suffer 1d6 hp damage from the fall plus 1d6 hp damage from 1d6 stakes. In addition, the tunnel's ceiling has a trapdoor holding several large, rough stones. Immediately after the PCs are dumped into the pit, this door opens and drops the stones on the party. PCs must roll Dexterity or below on 1d20 with a +2 penalty (because they have just been dropped into a pit) to dodge the stones or suffer 1d4 hp damage from each of 1d4 stones. Any PCs hanging on the gratings, levitating, or flying are immediately battered to the pit floor by the stones and suffer damage as those who fall into the pit.

If the PCs have not rescued any deep gnomes but do not attack, then negotiation to proceed is mandatory. If PCs immediately apologize for trespassing or offer to pay for passage through, a deep gnome advances to the grating to negotiate with the party. In such a case, the gnomes want only to assure themselves that the intruders are not truly hostile. Payment for safe passage is not required, and PCs need only to belt or sheath weapons to prove they mean no harm. Once the svirfneblin are satisfied the PCs are not a threat, the grate is lifted and the party may advance.

Svirfneblin (54): AL N(G); AC 0 (×2), AC 1 (×8), 2 (×44); MV 9; HD 3+6 (×44), 4+7 (×8), 5+8 (×2); THAC0 15 (×2), 17 (52); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon

The Map of Dylvwyllynn

Each map tile represents a 500' × 500' section of the city of Dylvwyllynn. While PCs may move within a tile, the only way to pass from one to another is via the roads or teleportation. The tiles are not scaled to miniature figures, but players may still use them for useful visual clues, denoting marching order, and locating PCs in relation to hazards.

Placing the Tiles: The City Map Key shows the location and orientation of each tile and defines the city's size and shape. As the PCs move through the city, the DM places the map tiles on the table to match the City Map Key. The letter in the center of each tile is used for orientation. For example, if the letter is upside down on the Key, the DM should be sure the letter on the map tile is upside down when placed on the table.

When PCs discover Dylvwyllynn, the DM places the map tiles in the configuration for the entrance area. When the PCs leave this area, the tiles are moved and reoriented one at a time as each new area is entered. Encounters, pursuit, and evasion take place on the tabletop in much the same scrolling fashion as a computer game maze.

Tile Descriptions

Tiles A–D. These are neighborhoods of dwarven family villas, apartments, shops, taverns, and inns.

Tile E. These are the warehouses, grain silos, meeting halls, and other large structures.

Tile F. The tiles depict great, cavernous dwarven cathedrals. They have vaulted ceilings soaring to a height of 200' and are dominated by huge statues of dwarven deities. The statues were carved *in situ* and the cavern excavated around them. The solid granite figures are 30' tall, each standing on a 25' high × 25' wide hexagonal pedestal. Each faces south with the name of the deity etched in 10' high dwarven runes on all six faces of the pedestal. The DM is free to decide which deities are depicted. Many were damaged in the quake and some are even toppled.

Tile G. This tile may be cut in two. This is a collapsed section and must be oriented to suit the map. It is impassable as the rubble is a dangerous, shifting mass of boulders and rocks. Attempting to tunnel a passage requires a great deal of work and time as well as the proper tools and materials for shoring up the walls. Spells such as *disintegrate* or *rock to mud* are of little use. With nothing to support the mass of loose rock above, the ceiling collapses into the void created by the boulders destroyed or softened by a spell; however, a *stone shape* spell works well for creating a buttress or supporting pillar. To make a passage requires 3d12 hours of labor per 100' of tunnel created. The tunnels are not automatically safe. Unless at least one party member has a mining or engineering proficiency, any new tunnels are treated as "unsafe areas" (see #4, Encounter Table).

The **G** tile is used as an overlay on other tiles to indicate that the area is in ruins.

DM note: The collapsed northern end of Dylvwyllynn is not the end to travel in that direction. It is the DM's option whether there are openings in this unsteady slag barrier which may lead to deeper realms of the Underdark or to undiscovered portions of Dylvwyllynn.

Tile H. These garden caverns were delved with steeply domed roofs 100' high. They were planted with fruit trees, flowering shrubs, and a multitude of flowers. They contained several fountains and were lighted overhead by a large stone orb on which special continual light spells were cast. When the dwarves fled, the magical lights failed. The trees, shrubs, and flowers died and were replaced by a forest of fungi. There are several different varieties of large tree-like fungi growing in scattered stands throughout these caverns. The floor is carpeted with a bizarre swirling rainbow pattern of colorful molds and lichens. Movement is reduced to one-half normal rates due to the clouds of mold spores rising from underfoot. Any movement or fighting causes the mold spores to rise and disperse. While harmless, they obscure vision to one-half normal and are unpleasant to breathe. Most creatures avoid these areas due to the adverse atmosphere and ravenous mold men. For encounters in this tile, roll 1d6.

1–3. Mold Men (5d4): INT low; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 1–6; THAC0 19 (1–2 HD), 17 (3–4 HD), 15 (5–6 HD); #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 or by weapon; SA –2 penalty to opponent's surprise roll; SD piercing weapons cause only 1 hp damage; SZ S–M; ML 10; XP 120–2,000; *MM*/256.

Thornies (2d8): INT animal; AL N; AC 3; MV 15; HD 4; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; SA thorn rake; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; *MM*/293 (Plant, intelligent).

4. Mold, russet: INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD nil; THAC0 15; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA spores; SD immune to weapons, cold, and fire; SZ S–L; ML nil; XP 35; *MM*/255.

5. Violet fungus (1d4): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 11 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1–4; Dmg nil, SA rots flesh; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; *MM*/120 (Fungus).

6. Shriekers (2d4): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 10 each; THAC0 16; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SD noise (90% chance of bringing mold men); SZ M; ML 12; XP 120; *MM*/120 (Fungus).

Tile I. Like Tile **G**, this one can be cut in two. It depicts the shore of Lake Atrox (area **9**). The dwarves built stone quays out into the lake and traveled its waters in enchanted stone barges. None of the barges still exists. All that remains now is the cold water and crumbling piers. If an encounter occurs, see area **9** or the Tile **K** encounters.

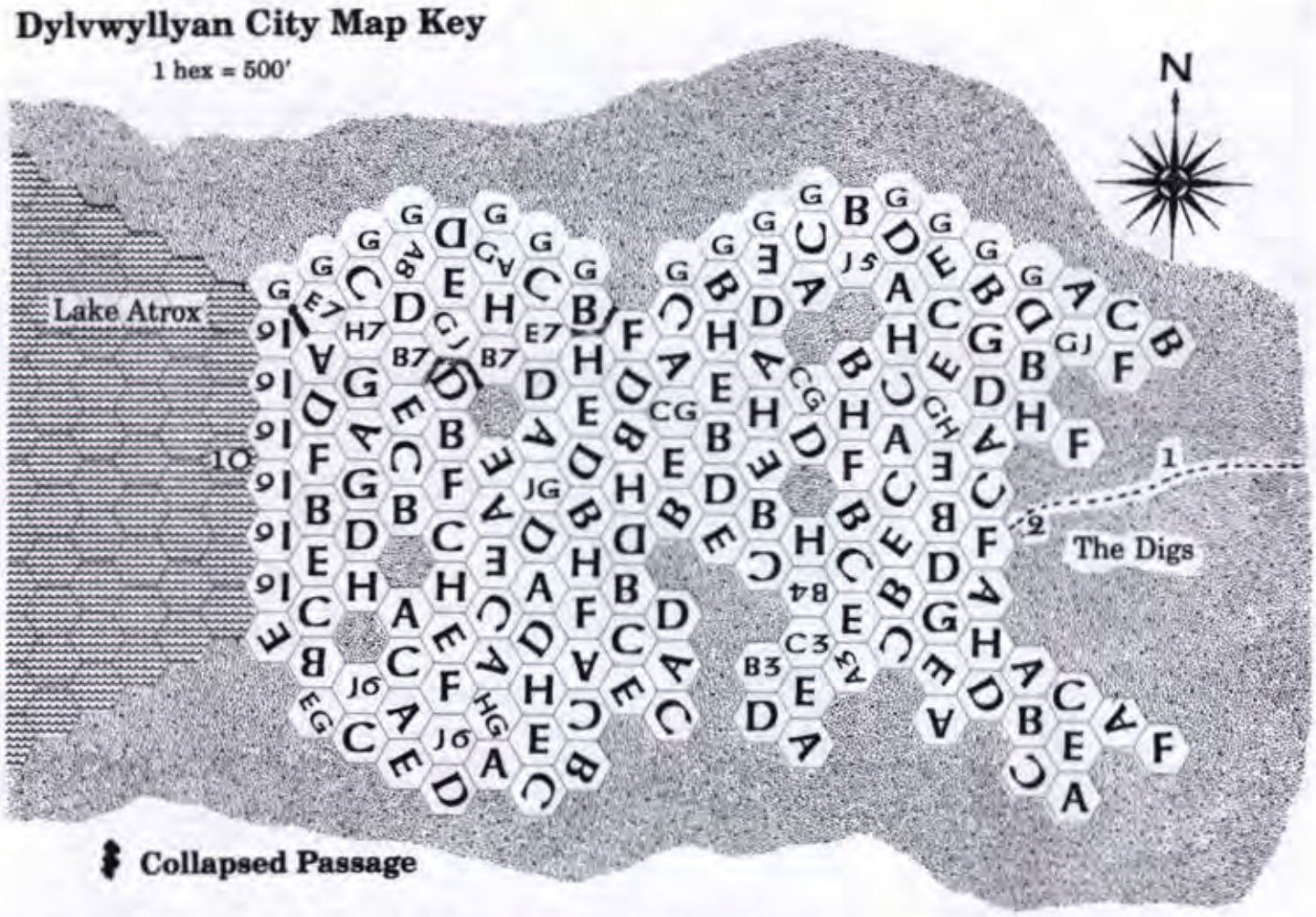
Tile J. These are the mammoth stairwells leading up to or down to other sections of the city (see areas **5** and **6**). They are wide shallow steps spiraling 1,500' up or down around a central pillar. The pillar is 150' in diameter, while the steps are 150' long. The remaining space is filled with a 50' wide ramp to allow carts or other vehicles to be hauled up or down, and a series of level, platform-like landings where those using the stairs can rest. If a **G** tile is used to overlay a **J** tile, then the stairs are impassable, being blocked about halfway up or down.

Tile K. This tile marks areas of solid rock or may be used to depict Lake Atrox. Unlike Tile **G**, tunnels or passageways may be delved through these areas using *disintegrate* or *rock to mud* spells. (Proper tools and shoring materials are needed to excavate). For lake encounters, roll 1d6 and consult the following:

1–3. Kuo-toan patrol (8): see area **9** for details.

4. Vodyanoi (1d2): INT average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 3, swim 6; HD 8; hp 32 each; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 3–12/3–12/1–10; SD summon electric eels; SZ L; ML 13; XP 2,000; *MM*/352 (Umber Hulk).

5–6. Electric eel (1d3): INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV swim 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SA electric shock; SD immune to electrical attacks; SZ L (9' long); ML 7; XP 65; *MM*/117 (Fish).



type; SA stun darts at +2 bonus to hit, cast *blindness, blur,* and *change self* once per day; SD radiate non-detection as spell, save at +2 vs. poison and +3 vs. everything else; 20% (×44), 25% (×8), 30% (×2) magic resistance; SZ S; ML 13; XP 420 (×44), 650 (×8), 975 (×2); *MM*/159, 160 (Gnome).

The actual number of svirfneblin defenders is at the DM's discretion. It takes only one turn for all the svirfneblin to be armed and at their defensive positions once an alarm is sounded.

If PCs have rescued prisoners, they find the deep gnomes a serious but gregarious bunch. If PCs ask, they receive an almost immediate audience with the burrow warden, Irzangle. (This may take time and a few bribes if PCs have not arrived with rescued prisoners.)

Irzangle (burrow warden): AL N(G); AC –1; MV 9; HD 6+9; hd 32; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 7, I 17, W 17, Ch 16; SA stun darts at +2 bonus to hit, cast *blindness, blur,* and *change self* once per day, 50% chance of summoning earth elemental once per day; SD radiate non-detection as spell, save at +2 vs. poison and +3 vs. everything else; 35% magic resistance; SZ S; ML 13; XP 1,400; *MM*/159, 160 (Gnome).

The burrow warden is a 235-year old, white-haired svirfneblin. If the PCs rescued the prisoners, he rewards them with ten 100-gp rubies. If PCs refuse the reward and state that it was their pleasure or duty to rescue the prisoners, they receive a +1 Charisma bonus when dealing with these svirfneblin for the next 2d12 days. Irzangle is like the Baron Enano Casta; while enthusiastic, he is no fool and does not let his emotions override his judgment. He works tirelessly for the deep gnome enclave. If PCs deal fairly with Irzangle, he treats them fairly. He has never heard of the *Shards,* but when the PCs describe the blades, his face brightens and he nods.

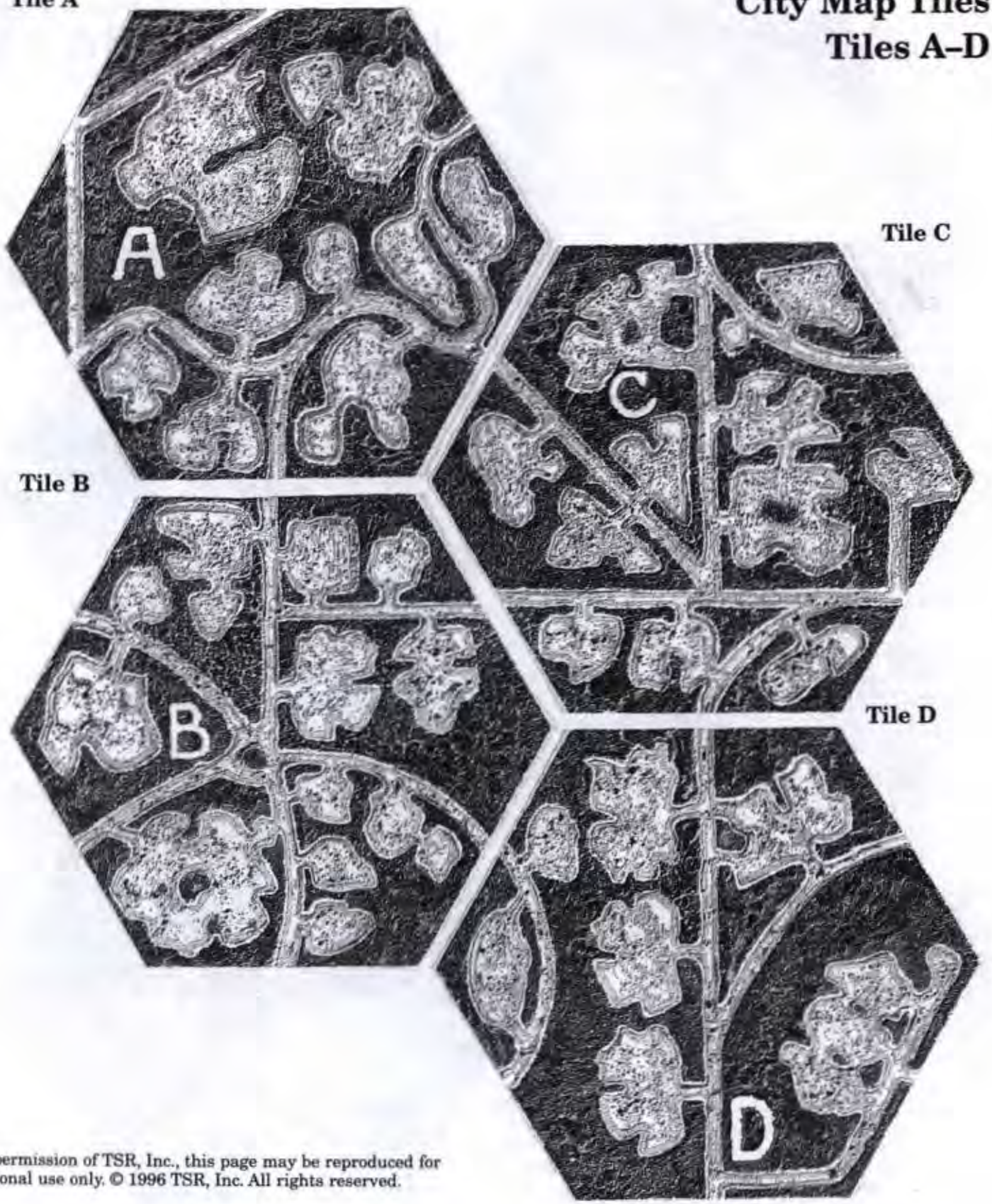
"Yes, I know them. The white-haired elves have the starry blade. I think they worship it.

"The bright one you describe is in the hands of the fish-men of the lake. I also know where to find yet another portion of this thing you seek."

He peers at you as if sizing you up.

"Sun-dwellers, listen. We can help each other. I can supply you with food, water, and guides. What I need from you are your sword arms and spells. I have an eye-monster to deal with. The creature terrorizes my people to the north and blocks our way to fertile fungi gardens. We are forced to make a long march around the area controlled by the many-eyed horror, and that journey is sometimes as deadly as the creature. I need guards to protect my miners and engineers while they block the tunnels where the creature roams."

City Map Tiles
Tiles A–D



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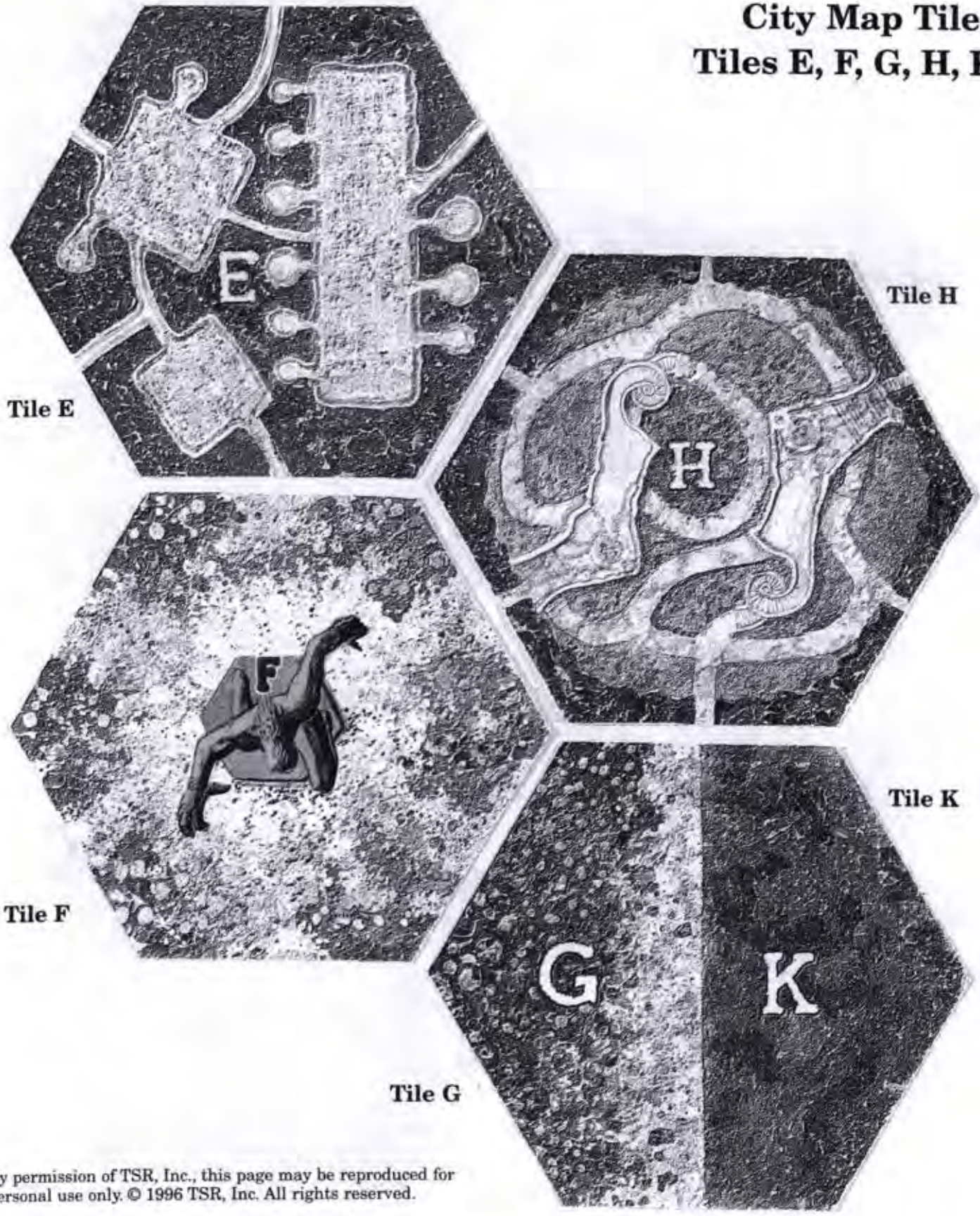
City Map Tiles
Tiles E, F, G, H, K



Tile E

Tile H

Tile F

Tile K

Tile G

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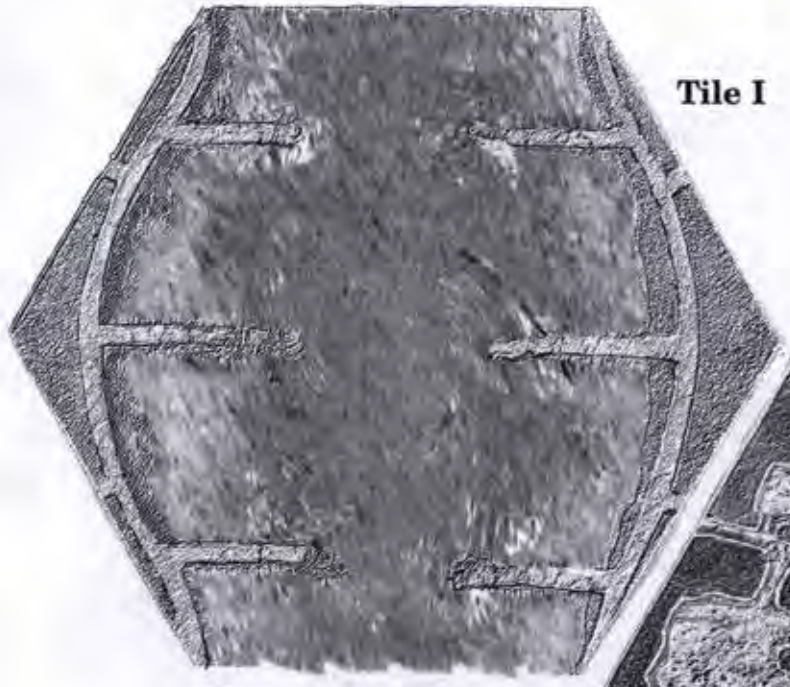
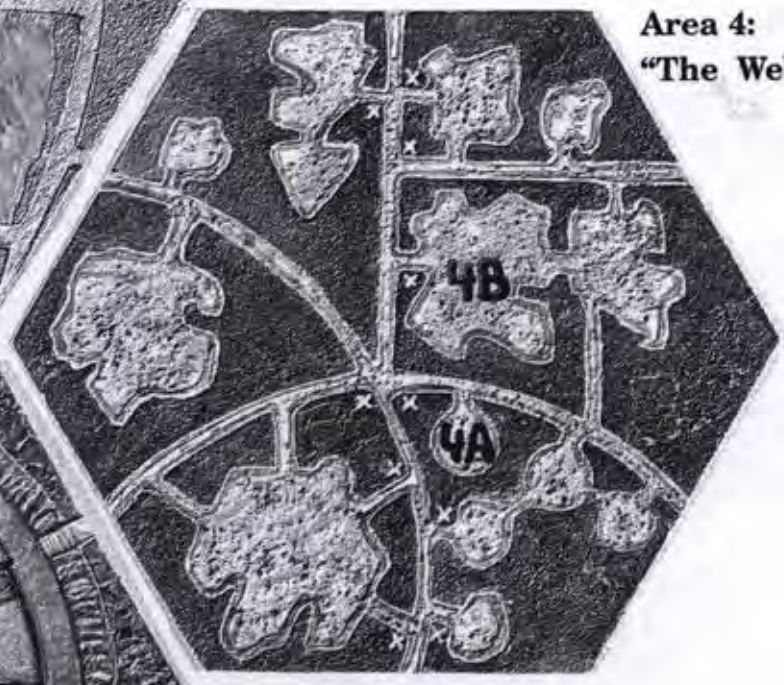
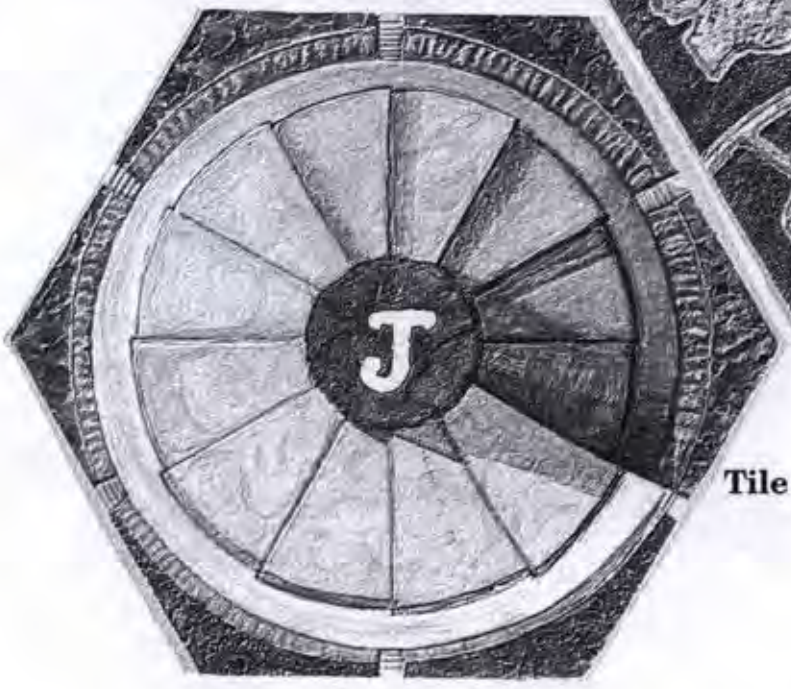
City Map Tiles
Tiles I, J, and Area 4



Tile I



Area 4:
"The Web"



Tile J

Instructions:
Photocopy these pages and mount them on a solid surface such as posterboard or mat paneling.

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Irzangle offers 5,000 gp worth of jewelry for the protection of his workers while they seal the tunnels and make a safe passage to the fungi gardens. He supplies PCs with two guides (HD 3+6, hp 20 each) and support in this quest, but not with warriors or other gnomes. The deep gnomes have lost too many warriors in that area and will not risk more for the sake of the PCs.

The tunnels to be collapsed and sealed are marked on the Web map (area **4**) and the gnomes intention is to work from south to north destroying the eastern and western tunnel entrances as they go. The svrifneblin work in groups of 10 (HD 3+6 each) and require 24 hours per tunnel to seal it properly. Should the gnomes be attacked by the driders of area **4** or anything else (the DM should not rule out other denizens of the city attacking the svirfneblin), they cease working and retreat to area **3** for at least 24+2d6 hours. Therefore, the PCs are looking at a minimum of 10 days guard duty (see Web map) and probably several days more. How successful or unsuccessful the svirfneblin are depends on how well the PCs protect them. The PCs may discuss tactics and strategy with the deep gnomes and learn as much about the eye-creature's habits as possible. The adventurers learn that several deep gnomes have seen the creature but were able to turn tail and escape before it saw them. (The DM should note that the svirfneblin are firmly convinced the creature is a beholder and always refer to it as such.) By careful questioning the PCs learn the following:

- The creature never invades the enclave proper and attacks only smaller wandering bands outside the northern defensive parameter.
- There have never been any survivors of combat with the creature, and no svirfneblin bodies or equipment have ever been found.
- The exact location of the creature's lair is unknown.
- There seem to be many giant spiders in the general area of the beholder attacks. Whether this is merely coincidental is not known.

If PCs are successful in protecting the gnomes or have already encountered and destroyed the threat to the svirfneblin in area **4**, Irzangle is as good as his word and provides all information and assistance he can to help PCs in their quest (excluding warriors). He

Adventuring in Dylvwyllynn

The city is dates back to the dawn of dwarven history. No mere cavern village or mining town, it was a city-state carved building by building from the unyielding rock. At its height, the sprawling underground city was ablaze with magical lamps and light fixtures. Then, some 1,000 years ago, the earth shifted. The earthquake damaged the city to such an extent the dwarves were forced to abandon it. Their flight was in two stages. The first wave was the bulk of the city's population fleeing the quake and its damage. They took what they could carry and departed. The second wave included the die-hards and treasure hunters who refused to leave the city regardless of consequences.

As news of Dylvwyllynn's troubles spread, orcs, drow, and other races that dwell in the Underdark came to take advantage of the situation. These soon killed or drove out the last of the dwarven citizens and took the city for themselves. In the years since the earthquake, the city has been populated, abandoned, and reclaimed by many different Underdark races. It is currently in a wilderness-like condition, populated by innumerable predators.

On the PCs' journey through the city, food and water are not a particular problem. The city holds many fungi gardens that contain edible types. In its glory days, Dylvwyllynn was also called the City of Fountains because of its large number of public and private fountains. Unless otherwise made impossible or illogical by the map tiles, there is a 50% chance of locating a working fountain for every 2,500′ traveled; however, there is a 5% chance that any fountain is fouled by a poisonous fungi (Type I poison on Table 51: Poison Strength, in the *DMG*).

As PCs wander the city, see the Dylvwyllynn Encounter Table for instructions on random encounters. Unless otherwise indicated, movement through a tile is at the normal movement rate for the party and only those hazards listed in the Encounter Table are present. The DM should note that there is no wood left in the city. The doors, furnishings, and other wooden items left in the city have long since gone to feed fires or to make tools and weapons. Any doors encountered are made of either stone or metal. The occupants of the city use dung and certain types of giant fungi for fuel.

Buildings, Structures, and Passageways

Most building interiors are multi-roomed, but the rooms themselves are bare and empty of anything save unidentifiable rubbish. Their furnishings have long since moldered to dust and any valuable or useful items have been looted. Many of the buildings have multiple levels, but very few have over four stories. When dwelling underground, structures can just as easily be built downward as upward. The chambers immediately off the passageway that the PCs are following are always considered the "first floor." Unless otherwise stated in the numbered locales in the adventure, the DM may determine if there are other floors above or below the first floor by rolling 1d100 and consulting the following values:

Roll 1d100	Floor Description
01–50	No other floors
51–95	Roll 1d4 to determine number of floors. DM's discretion on placing floors above, below, or both in relation to first floor.
96–00	Roll 2d4 or DM's discretion.

Passageways. The bulk of Dylvwyllynn is built upon the same level, horizontal plane. Thus, a PC standing on the first floor of a building on one side of the city is only a fraction of an inch higher or lower than a PC standing on the first floor of a building a mile away. This means the main passages and streets run on without grades, steps, or stairs. The passageways marked on the map tiles are either 20′ wide with 20′ ceilings for a main artery, or 10′ wide with 10′ ceilings for minor roads. Only the major and minor roads connecting the first floors of the city are detailed on the map. Smaller paths, secret passageways, and passable fissures caused by the earthquake may exist and are left to the DM's discretion. The DM should locate these before play begins and not suddenly place them for the convenience of trapped PCs.

Dylvwyllynn Encounter Table

For random encounters, see Chapter 11 of the *DMG*. If an encounter is called for, roll 2d6 and consult the table below. DMs using the *Night Below* campaign may prefer to use the wandering monster tables on the DM Reference Cards.

Roll 2d6

2. Duergar (2–9): These hunting parties search the city for any "game." They negotiate with strong adventuring parties and attack any weak or disabled parties (see area **2** for details).

3. Drow (2–8): These are scouts sent to spy on the kuo-toa, illithids, or myconids. They are unlikely to engage a strong party (see area **7** for statistics).

4. Unsafe area. This area was severely weakened by the earthquake and covers 100' × 100' area of passageway(s) or building(s). Pieces of the wall and ceiling fall at the slightest provocation, such as running, talking above a whisper, fighting, etc. If PCs enter an unsafe area and create a disturbance (DM's discretion using guidelines above) consult the following:

Roll 2d6

2. Collapse! Large piece of ceiling or wall falls on party member (DM's choice or random roll) for 5d6 hp damage. Those making a Dexterity roll have successfully dodged the larger stones but suffer 2d6 hp damage from smaller ones.

3–4. Heavy Rockfall. Hail of large and huge stones, each party member must roll Dexterity or less on 1d20 or suffer 3d6 hp damage. Those saving only suffer 1d6 hp damage from smaller stones.

5–7. Moderate Rockfall. Small pieces of the ceiling fall, a PC (DM's choice or random roll) is hit for 1d6 hp damage. A Dexterity check allows half damage.

8–11. Light Rockfall. Small pebbles, sand, and dust fall on PCs but cause no damage.

12. Collapse! The area collapses around the adventuring party. The PCs suffer damage as with a Heavy Rockfall, but the tunnel or building has collapsed completely. The party is unable to pass through this area again. The DM is advised to use such a collapse judiciously to avoid inadvertently trapping PCs in an area with no way out.

5. Sword spiders (1d4). These are duergar guard spiders who have escaped and returned to the "wild" (see area **2** for details).

6. Myconids (1d12). They are looking for dead bodies to return to their king for animation and use as undead slave labor. They prefer to avoid contact with anyone (see area **5** for details).

7. Mind flayers (1d3). If encountered, they are unlikely to negotiate and attack any weak adventuring parties or flee if presented with a strong threat. Each mind flayer has 1d3 troll slaves (see area **6** for details).

8. Kuo-Toa (2d10). These patrols are out looking for slaves and spying out the city. They do not negotiate and either attack weak adventuring parties or retreat to their lair for reinforcements. The patrols are accompanied by 2d4 troglodyte slaves (see area **8** for details).

9. Driders (1d4). These drow outcasts wander the endless dark of Dylvwyllynn and are accompanied by 2–12 huge spider companions per drider (see area **4** for details).

10. Svirfneblin (3d3). These patrol the parameter of the deep gnome settlement. They are suspicious of anyone they find, but negotiate with strangers. If not personally endangered by the act, they may (at DM's discretion) attempt to help those in need (see area **3** for details).

11. Fight. The PCs investigate the of battle and find two or more creatures locked in mortal combat. (The DM should choose or roll randomly to determine the creatures involved, i.e., drow vs. kuo-toa, etc.) The noise also brings other creatures to investigate (DM's discretion) in 1d10 rounds. The encounter may be as simple or as complex as the DM wishes. The DM is advised to plan a few of these encounters in advance rather than rely on the dice. These encounters can be used by PCs to rescue a band of svirfneblin or myconid and thus gain allies in Dylvwyllynn.

12. Underdark creatures. The DM should have a list of his own favorite creatures at hand for this encounter. The PCs may encounter cloakers, undead, or any creatures that may be logically found underground.

reveals that the silver hemisphere is in a myconid colony (area **5**). While the myconid and svirfneblin are on amiable terms, Irzangle has no influence with the fungus men and cannot intercede on the PCs' behalf. The deep gnomes and myconid are merely non-hostile neighbors, not necessarily friends.

The PCs may refuse to help the gnomes or abandon the job after they have accepted Irzangle's offer; however, as they say in the Underdark "Friends are few and far between, so hospitality is more precious than gold." If they don't help, PCs are welcome to remain with the svirfneblin but must pay (through the nose) for any services, food, and supplies at three times the prices listed in the *PHB*. They may also hire one or two guides, but no bearers, laborers, or guards. Guides must be paid 250 gp (in gems) per day and they will do no fighting. In addition, guides know only the main roads and are often unsure where many side roads lead.

Irzangle reveals the location of the silver hemisphere only for a high price. The DM may haggle mercilessly with the PCs about the information, starting at 12,000 gp and coming down to a minimum of 6,000 gp (75% must be paid in gems, magical items, or spellcasting services).

4. A Tangled Web. This is the hunting ground of a small group of driders. Outcasts of the drow (area **8**), they wander Dylvwyllynn in search of prey. They have struck upon a unique hunting procedure. They allow their prey to enter an area they call "the Web" (see map), then shepherd a gas spore toward the victims. The driders and their spider friends close in behind the victims. Thus, the unfortunate victims seeing what they believe to be a beholder heading their way retreat back into the arms of the driders. If PCs have befriended the svirfneblin (area **3**) and have been warned about this area, they should gain a +2 bonus against surprise. If not, they may be in for a nasty shock.

If and when the svirfneblin begin sealing tunnels (see area **3**), the driders are immediately aware of it. They also understand the significance of the gnomish strategy and move to put a stop to it. They avoid direct confrontation with guards or warriors and ambush and destroy the gnomish workers and their equipment in a series of hit-and-run attacks; however, the

drivers are not suicidal. If they are unable to defeat the PCs or put a stop to the destruction of the Web, they pack up their gas spores and move to a better hunting ground.

4A. Tarchkuk's Lair. This is the central core of the Web. It is here that the drider waits for word of anyone entering the area. He then uses his *unseen servant* spell to enter the spore nursery (area **4B**) and begins gently moving a gas spore in the direction of intruders. The other driders rush to circle behind the victims (using their natural *clairvoyance* ability to "see" that everyone is in place and the trap is ready to be sprung).

When the attack begins, the PCs may roll percentile dice. Any PC rolling 91–00 realizes that the "beholder" approaching is a gas spore. Alternatively, the PC may roll his Intelligence score or less on 1d20 to realize the "beholder" is a gas spore.

Tarchkuk, Photenk, and **Wahelkt** (Driders): AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 35, 33, 29; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4 or by spell or weapon type; SA poison, *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, suggestion, dispel magic* (each once per day); SD save as 7 HD monster; SZ L; ML 14; XP 3,000; *MM*/112, 113 (Elf, Drow); short sword, 12 poison arrows (type O, see Table 51: Poison Strength, *DMG*/73), short bow (Tarchkuk); *short sword +1, six arrows +1,* short bow (Photenk); hand axe (×3), 12 poison arrows (as Tarchkuk), short bow (Wahelkt).

Tarchkuk's spells (as 8th-level mage): *magic missile, protection from good, unseen servant, ventriloquism, darkness 15' radius, detect invisibility, misdirection, haste, hold person, vampiric touch, monster summoning II, shadow monsters.*

Photenk's spells (as 7th-level priest): *cause fear, cause light wounds, protection from good, find traps, hold person, obscurement, continual darkness, cause blindness or deafness, cause serious wounds.*

Wahelkt's spells (as 6th-level mage): *charm person, confuse languages, phantasmal force, wall of fog, detect good, invisibility, slow, spectral force.*

Huge spiders (10): AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA surprise, poison; SZ M; ML 8; XP 270; *MM*/326, 327 (Spider).

4B. Spore Nursery. If PCs have uncovered the truth about the gas spore/beholder ruse, they are extremely unlikely to believe the gas spores in the nursery are beholders. If PCs have not encountered the gas spore, the DM should keep the beholder pretext alive for as long as possible.

> As you open the door, the musty smell of fungi mixed with the stench of rotting carrion assaults your nostrils. Three large spherical objects move lazily about the room. Two are turned away from the door, while one gazes blandly at you with a single, huge eye. Waving stalks atop the spheres squirm listlessly.
>
> As you stand among the awful carrion, something moves in the corner of the room. A lone svirfneblin, naked and covered with filth, clumsily dodges one of the floating spheres. He slips and falls on the slimy floor, barely able to get to his feet again.

The deep gnome has been trapped in the room dodging the gas spores for two days (the spores are slow, but they are continually attracted to his body heat). He is exhausted and barely able to stand. If PCs attempt to destroy the fungi before rescuing the prisoner, they must take extreme care that he is not killed in the explosion of a spore. The PCs may rescue him easily enough using an *unseen servant* (*à la* Tarchkuk) or other appropriate spell (*web,* etc.) to trap, entangle, or move the deadly spores aside and create an escape route.

Gas spores (3): INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV 3; HD 1 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 6–36; SA spore infection; SZ M; ML 8; XP 120; *MM*/120 (Fungus).

If rescued, the deep gnome identifies himself as Ablingle (hp 7, other statistics as svirfneblin in area **2C**). He has several wounds delivered by the driders and is exhausted from his long ordeal in the nursery. The deep gnome can tell PCs that, besides a convenient place to grow gas spores, the room is also the driders' treasury. In a back corner is a chest wherein Tarchkuk (again, via *unseen servant*) places valuable objects recovered from victims. The chest contains 18 gems (rubies and emeralds taken from svirfneblin victims) worth a total of 2,000 gp. There is also a small bag of myconid *powder of hallucination* and a myconid potion of *fungus healing* (see *MM*/264, 265 for details). The driders came by these items when they

slaughtered a small party of myconids. If the myconid items are returned to the fungus men in area **5**, it increases the PCs' Charisma by +2 (18 maximum) when dealing with the myconid. The chest is locked and weighs 15 lbs. It can be removed by an *unseen servant* or *telekinesis*. If the chest is opened, 20 hairy spiders rush forth to attack anyone opening it. As Tarchkuk rarely feeds a prisoner to them, the spiders are ravenously hungry. Therefore, even if the chest is opened from a distance using a *knock* spell or other means, the spiders scurry toward the nearest PC.

Hairy spiders (20): AL NE; AC 8; MV 12, web 9; HD 1–1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ T; ML 10; XP 65; *MM*/326, 327 (Spider).

If PCs have not yet located the deep gnomes (area **3**), Ablingle gladly shows them the way, and the gnomes give the PCs a 500-gp reward for his return. If returned to the svirfneblin, the deep gnome tells them the truth about the beholder attacks. If PCs have put an end to that threat, Irzangle further rewards PCs with all he knows about the *Shards of the Day* (in this case, the PCs must still hire guides and pay for services; see Irzangle, area **3**).

5. The Garden Loft.

The stairs wind on and up around a great gray pillar. It is a seemingly endless climb before you step out onto level ground. The area is a riotous jungle of giant toadstools and mushrooms, towering in the gloom above. The floor is a multicolored carpet of fungi. Glowing fungi grows rampant throughout the cavernous chamber, giving everything a greenish tinge. Well-worn trails snake in and out of the forest of giant mushrooms.

In old Dylvwyllynn these chambers were orchard retreats that supplied the city with exotic fruits and a place to rest on green grass beneath the trees. All were lighted with huge overhead globes of modified *continual light* spells altered to act as sunlight. The globes have long since ceased to function, and there is not the slightest trace that trees ever grew here. The gardens are now forests of giant fungi, lichen, and molds.

The garden loft is a place of eerie beauty and sudden danger. As PCs step off the stairs, many things happen at once. They are surprised by duergar animator spore zombie on 1–3 on 1d10.

Animator Spore Zombies (3): AL N; AC 10; MV 9; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1–3/1–3; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, death magic, and poison, cannot be turned; SZ S–H; ML 20; XP 35; *MM*/264, 265 (myconid).

The spore zombies do not attack immediately but attempt to herd the PCs back down the stairs. If the PCs attack, the zombies defend themselves, but they are no match for heroes and should be quickly dispatched. They cannot be turned because they are not undead but animated by a fungal biochemical reaction.

If the spore zombies are attacked, it appears as if the toadstools have come alive and are moving slowly toward the PCs. Following the spore zombies are 40 myconid with hp 22 (×8), 18 (×8), 14 (×8), 9 (×8), 5 (×8). If the PCs destroy the zombies, the myconids attack. The 4 and 5 HD myconid bombard the PCs with pacifier and hallucinator spores (see *MM*/264, as animator spore above) while the lesser fungus men use a clubbing action of clasped fists to attack.

The PCs soon face overwhelming odds. The myconids send out distress spores, and 20 more myconids arrive each round after the first (until all myconids in the garden loft arrive). They can hear and understand undercommon but have no vocal organs to speak. Once PCs have killed or damaged a myconid, negotiation is difficult but not impossible. Thereafter, it requires weeks of careful apologetic contact to win simple nonbelligerence (trust is unlikely). Any PCs captured by the myconid are not mistreated but given a *potion of decay*. PCs must save vs. poison or die and become animator spore zombies. The myconids do not consider this cruel but mere self-preservation.

If PCs do not destroy the spore zombies (by casting *hold* or *web* spells, etc.) or retreat down the stairs before damaging a myconid, then friendly contact with the creatures is certainly possible. Therefore, smart PCs may wish to shout from the stairs or use *message, ventriloquism, whispering wind,* or other spells to communicate from a distance with the myconids. Again, this is unlikely to win trust but at least allows for negotiation (via rapport spores).

If PCs sheath all weapons and explain they are in Dylvwyllynn looking for a magical item, the myconids immediately move aside. After entering, the PCs are surrounded by four 5-HD fungus men and guided to a cavern, into the presence of the myconid king. The myconid guard surrounding the PCs is as much there for the PCs' protection as for the myconids. The guard keeps the PCs away from violet fungi, russet mold, and the voracious mold men. Questioning the guard is impossible and pointless. After the initial communication at the stairs, they refuse to emit more rapport spores. If *ESP* or other mind-reading spells are used, they reveal only the pervasive fear among the myconids.

Myconids (200): AL LN; AC 10; MV 9; HD 1 (×40), 2 (×40), 3 (×40), 4 (×40), 5 (×40); THAC0 19, 17. 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 × HD; SA spore clouds; SD except for the hands, a myconid's skin is poisonous, and contact causes 1d4 hp damage per touch; SZ T–L (2' tall per HD); ML 13; XP 65, 120, 175, 270, 420; *MM*/264, 265.

5A. The Reyseta Stone

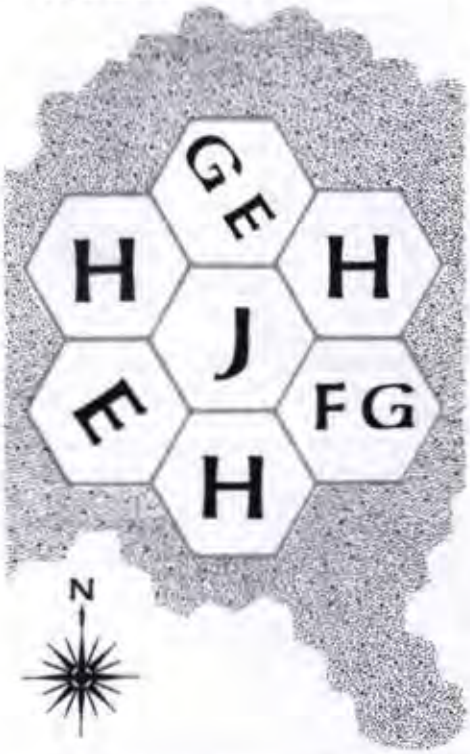
You feel it as you enter the cavern: this is the hub, the center of the myconid colony. It is cooler and brighter here. In the center of the chamber is a great round stone covered with a thick coat of glow fungi. It illuminates the room like a full moon on a clear night.

The myconid leading you waddles its way among the low stone mounds arranged in concentric circles. At last you reach a large empty space near the globe. There, the mushroom king stands stirring the bubbling, fuming contents of an earthenware pot. As you smell the fumes, for a brief instant you understand the love of the fungus for the decaying earth and the longing to meld. The understanding passes as quickly as it began, and then a voice comes booming through your head: "What do you seek?"

Reyseta (king): AL LN; AC 10; MV 9; HD 6; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 × HD; SA/SD as myconid; SZ L; ML 13; XP 650; *MM*/264, 265 (Myconid); *oil of fiery burning* (×2).

The fumes from the pot the king is stirring act as rapport spores. There is no saving throw, and the ability lasts for as long as the PCs are within 10' of the uncovered pot. The great globe covered with glow fungi was once a *continual light* fixture attached to the roof. The low mounds surrounding it are the

Garden Loft



tombs of the dead myconid kings. Their number attests to the length of time this myconid colony has been here.

At this point the PCs have several options depending on how they have arrived at this juncture. If they learned from the svirfneblin (area **3**) of the silver hemisphere's location, they can ask whether the king knows of such an object. If they do not know the myconids possess the object, they must describe the *Shards of the Day* thoroughly.

In any case, the king responds:

> "You seek the treasures of the dark places, and you are not allies of the grief-givers — the tentacled ones." The king bows its head.
>
> "The tentacled ones have a poison against which we have no defense. They spread a dust that changes my people, causing them to do violence to each other. Never in our history have we done violence to each other! The poison keeps the circles from melding, and we are become less than whole. I can find no cure. I fear we are lost!"
>
> The voice suddenly whispers rather than booms. "The shiny object you seek is here, but you cannot find it without my help."

If PCs inquire as to who are the tentacled ones, the DM may paraphrase or role play the following information: Not long ago, a group of mind flayers arrived in the deep places of the city, they were experimenting with dusts and powders (see area **6**). To what purpose, the myconids could not tell. Recently, the creatures have invaded the myconid gardens and have spread a toxic powder among the fungus men (the powder is *dust of contrariness;* see area **6**). When this happens, the myconids actually grow angry with each other. Since these attacks, there has been a great deal of difficulty melding. This inability to meld is causing some fungus men spontaneously to release distress spores without actually being in danger. This, in turn, leads to more arguments among the myconid.

> The king pauses, and his voice comes clearly again. "I will give you the object you covet. But first, you must recover a packet of the poison or the secrets of its making from the tentacled ones. With the knowledge of its making, I can brew an antidote."

If PCs return victorious or have already encountered the mind flayers and recovered a packet of the *dust of contrariness,* the king is overjoyed and immediately walks to a nearby tomb, moves several stones, and raises the silver hemisphere from its hiding place. He knows nothing further about the *Shards.*

6. Mind Flayers' Cellar. The stairs wind downward into a large undersection of the city that the dwarves called a "cellar." The illithid have left two staircases open (Tile **J**) leading to their section of the city for ease of access to an escape route should they need one. The mind flayers have used a methodical approach to their lair and have blocked several tunnels by bringing the ceilings down and collapsing the corridors. The few remaining entrances are guarded by their troll slaves (see below). The shaded areas on the map denote areas sprinkled with the *dust of contrariness.* The effects of this *dust* are the same as those of a *ring of contrariness,* but the dust has no other magical ability (see *DMG*/147). In addition, the effects of the dust wear off after 2d10+4 rounds. The PCs have no chance of noticing the magical dust among the dust of centuries found throughout Dylvwyllynn, but the areas so sprinkled radiate magic.

Mind Flayers' Cellar

Anyone entering these areas causes the dust to swirl up (the dust acts as a contact poison and need not be breathed to be effective). The PCs must save vs. poison or suffer the dust's effects. The DM makes all rolls secretly and informs those failing their save how to act (this can be done quickly and easily via a short written note). This allows affected PCs to ham it up as they bicker and argue. Self-preservation overrides the contrariness of the dust, and those affected do not allow themselves or other PCs to be killed or injured for the sake of argument. However, the contrariness can cause loud disagreements that bring trouble on the party, cause them to lose initiative, or miss opportunities to gain treasure.

6A. Guardians. Each guard post (see map) has three trolls. They allow nothing and no one to enter the area and are allowed to eat anything or anyone that tries. Each post is equipped with three shriekers (hp 12 each, see Map of Dylvwyllynn, Tile **H** for details) kept quiet in a dark room nearby. Should a battle be going against them, one troll retreats to this room and kicks one or two of the shriekers. The result-

ing shrieks can be heard throughout the area. A force of 1d4+1 trolls arrives to investigate the shrieks in 1d4 rounds. It requires another 2d4+1 rounds to bring the two mind flayers and all remaining trolls to the battle (see area **6C** for details).

Trolls (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 37, 25, 30; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 5–8/5–8/5–12; SA throw stones or wield weapon at +5; SD regeneration; SZ L; ML 20 (14); XP 1,400; *MM*/349.

All troll guards and attendants are under the influence of the mind flayers' innate *charm monster* ability. As an added measure of control, the mind flayers have attached *collars of obedience* about the necks of the trolls. Upon mind flayer command, the collars inflict pain in the same manner as the wizard spell *symbol*. Thus between the fear of pain and the *charm* spell, the creatures are wholly enslaved by the illithids and obey orders to fight to the death (ML 20). There are 22 trolls throughout the lair, three at each guard station and two personal attendants per mind flayer. If the mind flayers are destroyed or driven off, the trolls are freed from their enslavement. They immediately rip off their *collars of obedience*, and their morale returns to normal (14).

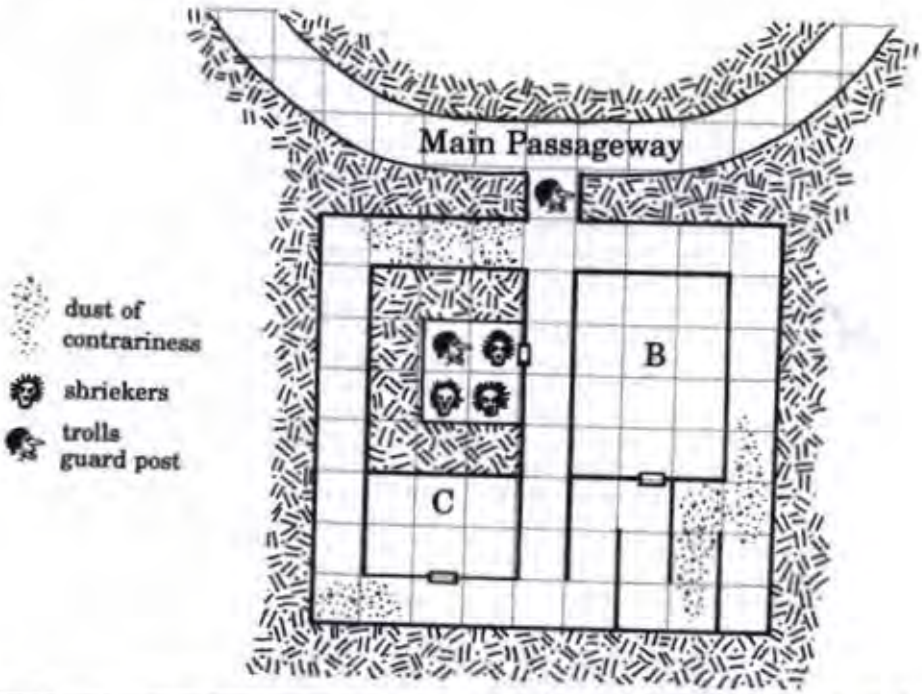
6B. Laboratory. The illithids are attempting to perfect the *dust of contrariness*. But due to the magical dust's adverse effects on the elder brain (the center of illithid community life), the experiments are being conducted well out of its telepathic range (see *MM*/251 for information on the elder brain). This is to the PC's advantage because, once the creatures are outside the range of the elder brain, they may be surprised with normal chances of success.

The illithids have chosen the usually placid and violence-deploring myconids (area **5**) as test subjects for the dust. If PCs have entered the illithid-controlled area undetected, there is a 35% chance that one mind flayer is in the laboratory when PCs enter. In such a case, it is accompanied by two troll slaves (hp 35, 30) and the mind flayer's only concern is escape (by *plane shifting* if necessary). If escape is impossible, it fights to the death. Such a battle brings 1d4+1 trolls to investigate in 1d4 rounds. It brings the other mind flayer and the remaining troll guards as battle in area **6A.**

Mind Flayers' Lair

1 square = 10′

Area 6



The room is well-lit by oil lamps. Stone tables line all four walls, and a large table dominates the center. There is a strange antiseptic smell to the air.

It is apparent this is a laboratory of some kind, but it stands in stark contrast to the myconid king's. Here there are scales, flasks, beakers, mortars and pestles, and vials everywhere. What immediately grabs your attention is a gruesome collection of human and demi-human skulls on a shelf. Each is upside down and perched securely on a tripod of finger bones. The lower jawbone of each skull is missing, and the nose and eye sockets are sealed with a greenish-black wax. The forehead of each skull is marked with a thin, spidery glyph in gold ink.

The skulls are containers (they slosh or rattle if shaken). Each is stoppered with a hard, thick plug of wax where the spinal cord enters the cranium. If a *comprehend languages* spell is cast, the gold glyphs reveal the assorted noggins contain a number of rare and costly alchemical agents worth approximately 3,000 gp total, and three of the skulls hold the potions *ESP*, *speed*, and *oil of slipperiness*.

Scattered throughout the laboratory are vague, cryptic notes and several sheets of vellum with complex chains of alchemical formulae concerning the *dust of contrariness*. If the notes and papers are collected and given to the myconid king (area **5**), he can decipher them and unravel the secrets of the *dust of contrariness*. If this is done, he rewards the PCs with the silver hemisphere. Also, once PCs have returned to the world above, they may sell a copy of the notes and formulae to a sage or alchemist for 2,000 gp.

6C. Illithids' Quarters. If PCs have entered the illithid lair undetected, there is a 65% chance of surprising both illithids here. If one of the creatures has been found elsewhere, then only one mind flayer and two troll guards (hp 31 each) are here. If discovered, they are unlikely to negotiate; they attack and destroy any weak adventuring parties or flee if presented with a strong threat.

Mind flayers (2): AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 8+4; hp 42, 39; THAC0 11; #AT 4; Dmg 2 hp (×4) + special; SA *suggestion, charm person, charm monster,*

ESP, levitate, astral projection, plane shift once per round as 7th-level mage, mind blast; SD 90% magical resistance; SZ M; ML 15; XP 9,000; *MM*/251.

While this room is little more than a resting place for the illithids when they are not in the laboratory, it is not without comfort. As the illithids have slaves to lug many of the comforts of home, the room contains two thick, soft, well-made sleeping mats, a large trunk, and three small chests. The large trunk is unlocked and contains bedding and personal paraphernalia of the mind flayers.

The three small chests are locked and trapped and their keys are in the possession of the mind flayers. Thief PCs receive a –10% penalty to find and remove the well hidden traps and a –20% penalty to pick the intricate locks. The needle traps jab anyone picking the lock, injecting a Type D poison (see Table 51: Poison Strength in the *DMG*). The chests contain an assortment of odd items. One contains a silver decanter, a silver serving tray, and six jeweled, gold goblets worth a total 1,500 gp. The second chest contains six scrolls. The scrolls are used primarily as trade and barter items for the mind flayers and include a *protection from elementals* and a *protection from petrification;* the others are a scroll of three 1st-level wizard spells (DM's choice), a scroll of two 2nd-level wizard spells (DM's choice), a scroll containing *dust devil* and *heat metal,* and one containing *cure light wounds* and *cure serious wounds.* Each is in a finely crafted copper scroll tube worth 100 gp. The third chest holds three small silk pouches, each containing one use of *dust of contrariness* and a vial of potion. The potions are *fire resistance, giant strength,* and *oil of fiery burning.* If PCs attempt to hammer them open (each lock withstands 10 hp damage before opening), the concussion causes the flask with the *oil of fiery burning* to shatter and the oil to detonate. This not only damages PCs but destroys the contents of the third chest and 1d6 scrolls (and scroll tubes) in the second chest (the DM may choose or roll randomly to determine which scrolls are ruined). If the PCs have not yet encountered the myconid (area **5**), they may trade the *dust of contrariness* from the chest and the laboratory notes from area **6B** for the silver hemisphere in the fungus men's possession. If the PCs are helping the myconid (area **5A**), they need only show the silk pouches of dust and lab notes as proof they have completed their part of the bargain.

7. The Fall of the House of Ramma. The area is patrolled by drow. They are refugees, not immigrants, having arrived through the shifting debris of Dylvwyllynn's northern wall. Being primarily of the clan Ramma (a clan that backed the losing side of a *coup d'état* in a deeper drow city), they escaped annihilation and have stopped in Dylvwyllynn to lick their wounds and plot their revenge. The drow have no allies in the city, and they are actually at war with kuo-toa (area **9**).

Entrances to the drow area are defended by guardposts (see map) constructed of 3'-high stone barriers across passageways. The posts are manned by four drow each. There is a 10% chance, that Captain Dakaar (area **8C**) is at any guardpost at anytime. Each guard contingent also has an enslaved umber hulk at its disposal. If a fight goes against the guards, they send the umber hulk in a suicide assault while they retreat. Due to the distances between the guardposts, guards cannot easily call for help and must retreat to the Temple of Lolth (area **8**) to give warnings and gather reinforcements. If PCs can get past the guards, they may locate occupied buildings by following the trails through the dust. Any PCs captured by the drow must be quickly rescued (within 2d12 hours) or they are sacrificed to the goddess Lolth (see area **8F**).

Elf, Drow (4): AL CE; AC 0; MV 12; F4; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; SA *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness* (each once per day); SD +2 on all saving throws vs. spells, surprised only on 1 on 1d10; SZ M; ML 14; XP 650; *MM*/112, 113; *short sword +1, dagger +1,* hand crossbow or poisoned javelins (50/50 chance of either, javelins use sleep poison, save at –4), drow *chain mail +1, drow shield +1.* In addition, all drow in the city, from lowest to highest are equipped with a drow *cloak of elvenkind* and drow *boots of elvenkind.*

Umber Hulk: INT average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6, burrow 1–6; HD 8+8; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 3–12/3–12/1–10; SA confusion, surprise; SZ L; ML 13; XP 4,000; *MM*/352.

8. Temple of Lolth. Shortly after arriving in Dylvwyllynn, the drow stumbled upon a beholder and destroyed it. In its treasure hoard the *Shard of Midnight* was found. They believe the finding of the blade is an omen of good fortune and a sign of favor from the dark goddess Lolth. They have converted an old dwarven villa into a temple dedicated to the evil Queen of Spiders and enshrined the blade there.

8A. Entrance.

> You notice this area has been thoroughly cleaned of the telltale dust common throughout the city. There is a sweetish-sour odor of burning incense and blood in the passageway, but you can't trace the source of the smell. Stepping into a four-way intersection, you see the east, west, and north tunnels are blocked by iron grates.

The four-way intersection is a guardpost with four drow temple guards (hp 22 each, see area **7** for details) and an umber hulk (hp 44, as area **7**). They attack intruders immediately and need only shout an alarm to bring the reinforcements from the guard barracks (area **8B**) in 1d4 rounds. The heavy grates have no ropes or pulleys and must be raised manually (this requires a combined Strength of 35 with only two persons being able to work together in the tunnel). The drow move the grates by using their natural *levitation* abilities. Reinforcements arriving at any battle in the intersection are unlikely to raise the grates but simply use crossbows and javelins to attack. The noise of battle brings the captain (area **8C**) in 2d4 rounds and the priestesses (area **8D**) in 3d4+4 rounds. If the noise of battle is still present or no one has contacted her to tell her what is happening, the baroness (area **8E**) arrives in 10+2d4 rounds to investigate.

8B. Barracks. These rooms are sparse, bare, and spotlessly clean. The drow soldiers take pride in keeping the barracks and equipment as neat as possible. Each barracks has eight comfortable and well-made pallets. Two large chests containing communal property (blankets, rope, etc.) and four small chests containing the personal items of the guards. Unless reacting to an alarm at the entrance (area **8A**), eight drow temple guards are always here (hp 22 each) and an umber hulk (hp 44). There is also a 20% chance that Captain Dakaar may be in any barracks inspect-

ing his troops. If PCs investigate the rooms, they find the small chests each contain about 100 gp worth of such things as silver rings and bracelets, small gems, and 1d6 pp.

8C. Captain's Quarters. The captain keeps an austere and spartan room. There is only a sleeping pallet and a small chest containing blankets, clothes, 100 pp, and 500 gp worth of gems and jewelry. There is only a 30% chance of finding him in this room. Otherwise, he is making his rounds of the guardposts (area **7**) or in the barracks (area **8B**).

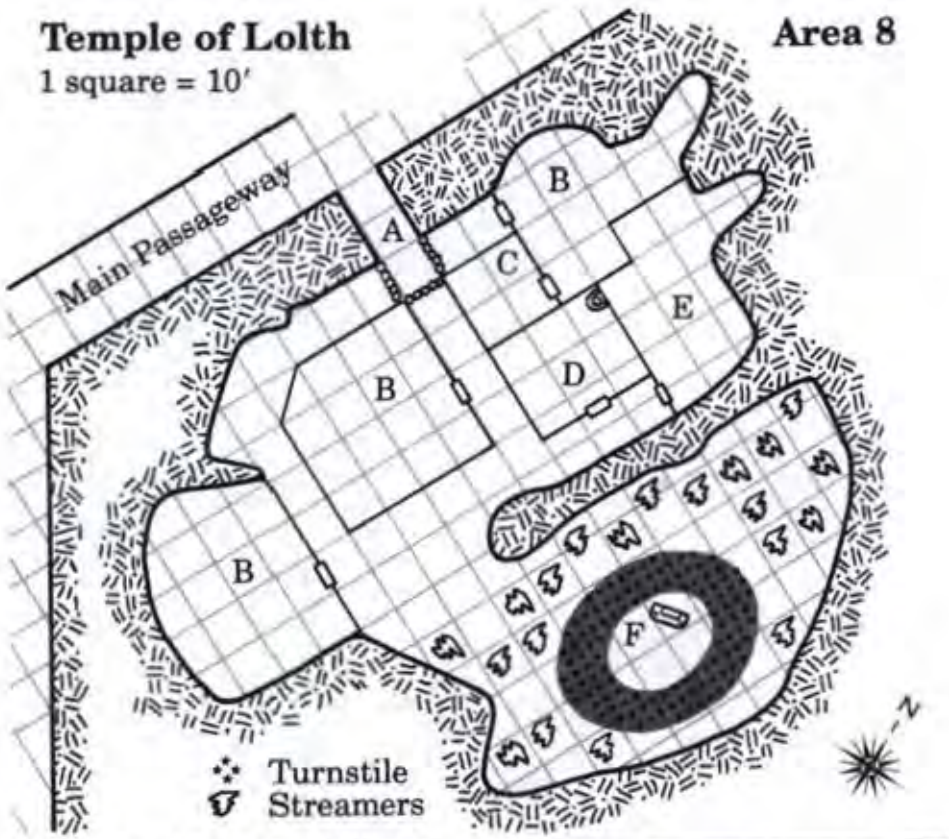
Captain Dakaar Ramma: AL CE; AC –1; MV 12; F5/M5; hp 25; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA/SD as drow (above); D 18, Ch 17; MR 60%; ML 16; XP 2,000; *MM*/112, 113; *short sword +2, dagger +2, crossbow +1, drow chain mail +3, drow shield +2, wand of magic missiles* (25 charges), *brooch of shielding, iron flask* (contains a xorn).

Spells: *burning hands, charm person, magic missile, shocking grasp, Melf's acid arrow, web, Melf's minute meteors.*

Dakaar is haughty, belligerent, and genuinely evil. He is a good strategist, and — while it was the baronesses' faulty stratagems that nearly proved death for the Ramma clan — it was his tactical expertise that saved the few survivors now populating Dylvwyllynn. In battle, Dakaar's first move is to release the xorn from his *iron flask*. He is also not shy about using his *wand of magic missiles*.

Xorn (from *iron flask*): AL N; AC –2; MV 9, burrow 9; HD 7+7; hp 37; THAC0 13; #AT 4; Dmg 1–3 (×3)/6–24; SA surprise; SD immunity to natural and magical fire and cold, half-damage from electrical attacks and edged weapons; SZ M; ML 16; XP 4,000; *MM*/367.

8D. Priestesses' Quarters. The room is occupied by three minor priestesses of Lolth. There is a 50% chance of finding them here or in the temple (area **8F**). Each of the priestesses is vying for the post of high priestess. In battle, they are not brilliant strategists. They fail to understand that the overwhelming might of the drow that they were taught to revere in their youth is more self-aggrandizing propaganda than actual fact. Therefore, they have a penchant for demanding suicidal frontal assaults by followers instead of more rational tactics. However, they are "true believers" and fight to the death rather than be captured by non-drow opponents.



Priestesses of Lolth (3): AL CE; AC 1; MV 12; F3/C3; hp 15 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA/SD as guards (above); MR 56%; ML 14; XP 420; *MM*/112, 113; *short sword +1, dagger +2,* drow *chain mail +2,* drow *shield +1.*

Spells: *cause fear, cause light wounds, dust devil.*

The chamber contains three finely made sleeping pallets. Each is embroidered with grisly scenes of drow worship and sacrifice. A small, delicately carved fountain bubbles and gurgles continuously in the northeast corner. There are five small, locked chests against the west wall. Three of the chests contain the 100 gp worth of personal items (gems, silver combs, etc.). The fourth chest holds various ceremonial items needed for the rites and rituals of the temple (give good-aligned PCs 1,000 XP each if they destroy these items). The fifth chest is a trap:

> As the lid rises a wriggling mass of fingers emerges. The chest erupts, disgorging an unknown number of human and svirfneblin hands and kuo-toan claws. They leap and run about on their fingertips in a spider-like fashion. As you look, you see that each is tattooed on the back with the image of a black widow spider.

The chest is trapped with 20 crawling claws. They are the hands removed from sacrificial victims. These horrors attack any non-priestess of Lolth who opens the chest.

Crawling Claws (20): AL N; AC 7; MV 9; HD 2–4 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SD immune to turning, holy water, death magic, *sleep, hold, charm, raise dead,* and *control undead;* SZ T; ML 20; XP 35; *MM*/48.

8E. Quarters of the Baroness

> This room is a monument to opulence. The air is fragrant with perfume. The floor is carpeted with two matching rugs. Mongrelman hides, bugbear pelts, and even a stone giant's skin hang on the walls as trophies. The room contains a large bed and a wooden table. There are also four large trunks and four smaller chests and a large, polished brass

mirror sends a perfect yellow-golden reflection back from the northern wall. The southern wall is dominated by a fountain that is obviously used as a bathing basin. Bottles of perfumes and oil rest on its edge.

This room is occupied by the Baroness Ramma Anchora, unquestioned ruler of the Ramma clan. If PCs investigate the trunks, they find 200 gp worth of bed-clothes, clothes, and personal belongings of the baroness. The smaller chests contain ceremonial items needed for the temple of Lolth, including five blocks of *incense of meditation*. Good-aligned PCs should destroy the ceremonial items (except for the magical incense) and receive 1,000 XP for doing so. While heavy and cumbersome, the plush carpets are worth 2,000 gp each. While the trophy hides are relatively worthless, the perfumes by the basin are rare and worth 1,000 gp per bottle.

There is a 50% chance of finding the baroness here. (Otherwise she is in the altar room). The baroness is an extraordinarily charming, beautiful, and evil woman. She brooks no argument, accepts no criticism, and expects total obedience and commitment from underlings. She feels neither remorse or pity for the failed coup. She feels she is the injured party in that her followers let her down by not succeeding in the overthrow.

Baroness Ramma Anchora: AL CE; AC –1; MV 12; HD F8/C9; hp 56; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, clairvoyance, suggestion, dispel magic* (each once per day); SD as drow guards; I 17, Ch 18; MR 68%; ML 14; XP 6,000; *MM*/112, 113; *short sword +2, dagger +3, hand crossbow +1, drow chain mail +2, drow shield +1, ring of protection +2, potion of human control, staff of swarming insects* (17 charges).

Spells: *cause fear, command, detect good, protection from good, charm person or mammal, dust devil, hold person, silence 15' radius, animate dead, prayer, speak with dead, cloak of fear, free action, protection from good 10' radius, flame strike.*

8F. Altar.

From the ceiling, ten feet overhead, hang thick, multicolored, streamers. Each streamer depicts a more gruesome and horrific bit of drow history than the one next to it. There are numerous depictions of the original schism between the elves and the war that drove the drow beneath the earth. In all of these, the elves of the world above are depicted as distorted, ugly brutes, while the drow are presented as beautiful and graceful. There are also a few streamers showing spectacularly absurd victories by small drow armies over large numbers of kuo-toa, mind flayers, and other underworld races.

There is an overpowering odor of incense and old blood you smelled at the entrance, but the floor and walls are sparkling clean. The center of the room is disorienting, where a great wall of darkness stretching from floor to ceiling neither catches nor reflects light, giving the uneasy impression that it is shifting and moving.

The drow have set permanent walls of *continual darkness* around the altar (see map for areas of darkness, treat as if cast at 20th level for purposes of *dispel magic*). *Light* and *continual light* spells are ineffective, as they are immediately canceled by the permanent *darkness*. As the worshipers of the evil goddess say: "Anyone approaching her altar must pass through darkness to reach it." In Lolth's case, this is a literal as well as an allegorical expression. The shifting and moving nature of the darkness is an optical illusion (it is merely the mind playing tricks such as phantom lights in a pitch black room).

There is a 50% chance that the baroness is here (if not, she is in area **8E**). In addition, there is a 50% chance the three priestesses of Lolth are in the altar room. If the baroness or priestesses are here, there is also a contingent of eight temple guards with them. Also, if he has not been encountered elsewhere, Captain Dakaar is also here. If the PCs have entered the altar room, the baroness is outraged and fights to the death to preserve its sanctity.

In combat, the streamers hanging from the ceiling cause a great deal of difficulty. They hang freely and barely touch the floor; however, they are anchored securely by bolts to the ceiling and cannot be pulled down (PCs may actually climb the streamers if they wish). As arrows, throwing spears, grenadelike missiles, etc., are snared by the streamers, all missile combat is at –4 to hit (treat all targets as being 50%

hidden by cover on Table 44: Cover and Concealment Modifiers in the *DMG*). The cloth in the tapestries is a thick metal mesh weave that is difficult to cut or pierce and is virtually fireproof. The PCs may cut the streamers down only if they have metal shears, tin snips, or other such devices. The streamers and walls of darkness cause any combat to be a prolonged game of hide and seek.

The temple guards move to protect the entrance to the altar room and keep anyone from escaping. They also send one of their number to gather reinforcements from the barracks (areas **8B**). If the baroness is not in the room, only four guards (hp 22 each) are on duty, but combat conditions remain as described. In this case, the baroness, the priestesses, and more guards arrive in 4d4 rounds.

If PCs enter the walls of darkness, they find the area trapped with deadly floor-to-ceiling turnstiles. The turnstiles are made of some fungal wood bristling with sharpened and poisoned spikes. Each turnstile is geared at the top and bottom with each gear meshing neatly with its neighbor. Thus, anyone attempting to pass between two turnstiles (either walking, flying, or levitating) is skewered by 2d6+2 spikes for 1d6 hp damage each. It is impossible to ignore the damage and force a way through as the turnstiles become jammed on the skewered victim and fail to turn. Anyone stabbed must also save vs. poison or suffer 5d6 hp damage while those saving suffer only half damage. The turnstiles may be destroyed individually by fire or spell. There is only one safe, narrow path through the darkness, and the PCs must use trial and error or a *find the path* spell to locate it.

> You step out of the darkness as if stepping into another world. You stand in a small area lighted by a smoking brazier and engulfed by walls of night. At the north end of the lighted area is a blood-stained altar. It is a large slab of stone with a shallow coffin-shaped indentation in its center. In the garish orange-red light of the brazier, the stone seems almost black. At the four corners of the slab, incense burners pour out a sickly purple smoke. At the head of the indentation, with stars shimmering in the depths of a deep black blade, is the *Shard of Midnight.*

The altar area is the treasury of the temple. As the Ramma clan lost most of their wealth and property in the abortive coup, the bulk of the non-magical treasure is from Dylvwyllynn.

At the south end of the lit area are five small urns. One contains coal for the brazier, a second incense; the others are full of coins, gems, and various jewels worth 5,000 gp per urn. Most of the magical treasure is being used by the Ramma. That held in reserve is in a large, locked and iron bound chest near the urns. It holds potions of *fire breathing, speed,* and *invisibility,* two pairs of drow *boots of elvenkind* and two drow *cloaks of elvenkind.*

If a rogue opens the chest, he has the same chance as his Find/ Remove Traps ability of noticing the chest has a false bottom. Other PCs examining the chest must make an Intelligence check (roll Intelligence or less on 1d20) with a +2 penalty to notice the false bottom. The false bottom covers 10 scrolls.

Seven of the scrolls are nonmagical texts detailing the various evil rituals of the temple. They are worth 1,000 gp each to any sage. Two are priest scrolls with the spells *hold person* and *stone shape.* The last one is not a scroll but a map of the area of Dylvwyllynn that is known to the drow. (The DM should prepare this in advance and may make it as limited or extensive as he wishes. However, it should by no means be a complete map of the city.)

9. Fish Tales.

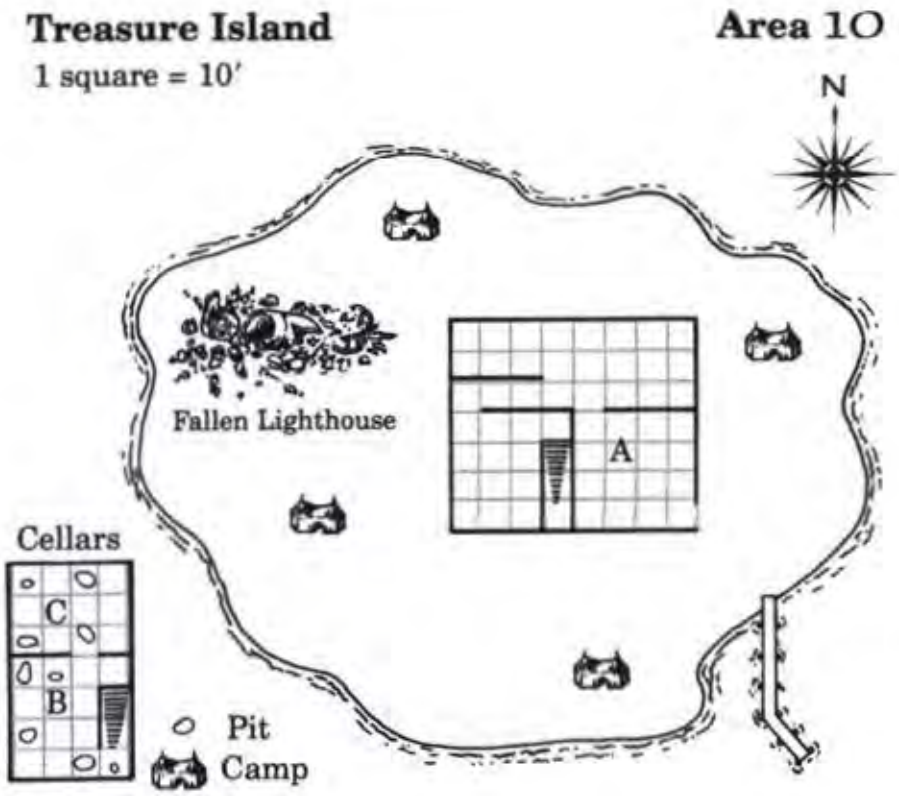
> As you wander down the passageway, you smell water. Suddenly, the passage ends and you step out into an immense mind-boggling vastness. You are standing on the shores of a subterranean lake. With no hint of wind, the water that stretches as far as you can see is smooth and shiny as glass. It is impossible to tell how far the lake stretches into the gloom. In the endless gloom, you can see the barest hint of a rock jutting out in the lake. As you look back, you see the great wall of the cavern rising up into the darkness. You notice there is neither window nor vent overlooking the lake.

This is Lake Atrox, a huge underground body of fresh water. The blank wall overlooking the lake is purposely devoid of windows and vents to keep unwanted winged visitors out. Once on the lake shore, the PCs are squarely in the kuo-toa controlled area of the city. The kuo-toa arrived via the lake from some deep underground kuo-toan city. (For DM's using the *Night Below,* the Dylvwyllynn kuo-toa are aware of their brethren in the City of the Glass Pool, but, in true kuo-toan fashion, the two communities do not cooperate with each other.) The kuo-toa are attempting to create a base from which to launch slave-taking raids on the upper world. While they control the lake front and the entrances to it, they are having difficulty moving into the city proper because of drow raids and their own chaotic approach to the conquest of Dylvwyllynn.

The kuo-toa have established no guardposts, but four patrols — half on shore and half in the water — wander ceaselessly up and down the lake front. The land-based patrols are accompanied by troglodyte slaves. All patrols immediately notice and investigate any light source on the lake shore and one patrol arrives in 2d4 rounds. Thereafter, the other three patrols arrive separately in 1d4, 2d4, and 3d4 rounds respectively (if the rolls dictate, it is possible for patrols to arrive simultaneously). The patrols do not negotiate and attack anyone they discover. If a battle is going against the kuo-toa, they retreat to their lair to warn their duke, Alooploopo, and gather reinforcements (see area **10A**).

The common battle tactic of the kuo-toa is to send a wave of 10 troglodytes in a frontal assault to absorb the brunt of any missile or spell attacks. This is followed by the remaining troglodytes and then the kuo-toa. If battle takes place on the lakefront itself, the kuo-toa take to the water in an attempt to encircle the PCs. The DM should note the troglodytes are only poor to fair swimmers and prefer to avoid the water. Also, if the kuo-toa are defeated or retreat, the troglodytes flee. If the kuo-toa are victorious, any captured PCs must be rescued quickly (2d12 hours) or they are used as food for the kuo-toa and troglodytes.

Kuo-Toan Patrol (8 each): INT high; AL NE; AC 3; MV 9, swim 18; HD 2 (×6), 8 (×2); THAC0 19 (×6), 13 (×2); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2–5 and/or by weapon type; SA +1 strength bonus on all weapon attacks; SD skin secretions reduce chances to grapple, grasp, tie, or *web* to 25%, surprised only on a 1, immune to



poison, paralysis, and illusion magic, electrical attacks cause half damage, *magic missiles* cause only 1 hp damage; SZ M; ML 13; XP 175 (×6), 1,400 (×2); *MM*/215, 216; shield, dagger, spear, weighted throwing net, and harpoon (8-HD fighters only).

Troglodytes (18): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1–2/1–2/2–5 or by weapon; SA use special javelin with +3 bonus to attack roll and do 2d4 hp damage, secrete disgusting oil, save vs. poison or lose 1d6 points of strength for 10 rounds; SD chameleon-like ability; SZ M; ML 11; XP 120; *MM*/348; 50% use teeth and claws, 25% two javelins (see SA above), 10% stone morning star, 10% stone battle axe; 5% sword.

10. Treasure Island. A lighthouse once graced this little island's shores to guide dwarven barges and boats on the lake. It toppled into the lake during the earthquake, however, and only the light keepers' residence remains. Even from the outlying piers, PCs can do no more than glimpse the nearest rocks of the island.

Kuo-Toa

The PCs may investigate the island either by swimming, flying, or teleporting. They may also find the nearest fungal garden and use some of the giant toadstools as material for dug-out canoes. Swimming is the most dangerous course of action, as it gives the kuo-toa the "home field advantage." If PCs swim, the noise attracts attention and there is a 75% chance that they are attacked in the water by kuo-toa forces (both from areas **9** and **10**). The island's force of kuo-toa and any remaining patrols will certainly attack PCs in the water. If PCs use canoes, the fish men do not attack them while on the water but wait until the have made landfall on the island. They then either sink or steal the canoes, attempting to leave the PCs stranded on the island.

10A. The Keeper's House. This structure was built in the same manner as shepherd cottages in the world above. (The Keeper was often called the "Shepherd of Ships.") With its whitewashed walls and thatched roof, the sheer expense of maintaining the structure was a testament to the power and wealth of Dylvwyllynn. The house withstood the quake and is still relatively sound though the thatching has long since rotted to dust and the building is roofless. In addition, the interior wooden walls have either rotted or been stripped and used for firewood. All that remains of the structure is the skeleton of the stone outer and supporting inner walls.

There are 20 normal kuo-toa (hp 10 each) encamped around the building. The interior rooms are barracks for the kuo-toan duke named Alooploopo and his two captains (45 hp each), three lieutenants (hp 35 each), four whips (see below), and two monitors (see below). They immediately join in and direct any battle taking place on the island. The duke commands from behind the battle, directing his troops and casting spells as appropriate. His captains and lieutenants rally the fighters and, as there are no slaves on the island, use the lower level kuo-toa much the same way as the patrols use the troglodytes. The whips and monitors maintain morale and battle frenzy.

Monitors (2): AL NE; AC 4; MV 9, swim 18; HD 7; hp 56 each; THAC0 14; #AT 4; Dmg 2d4 (×2)/1d4 +1 (×2); SA double damage from hand attacks (2d4) if trying to subdue; SD as kuo-toa; SZ L; ML 17; XP 975; *MM*/215, 216.

Whips (4): AL NE; AC 4; MV 9, swim 18; HD 3F/3T; hp 13 each; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; MS 25%, HS 25%, DN 30%, CW 70%; SA/SD as kuo-toa; SZ L; ML 17; XP 420; *MM*/215, 216; dagger, long sword.

Duke Alooploopo: AL NE; AC 4; MV 9, swim 18; HD 10C/12T; hp 48; THAC0 14; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2–5 and/or by weapon type; MS 65%, HS 70%, DN 70%, CW 75%, RL 86%; SA/SD as kuo-toa; S 17, I 17, W 17; SZ L; ML 15; XP 5,000; *MM*/215; *harpoon+1, dagger +1, net of entrapment.*

Spells: *cause light wounds* (×2), *detect good, protection from good, charm person or mammal* (×2), *hold person, silence 15' radius, cause blindness or deafness, cause disease, bestow curse, cause serious wounds* (×2), *protection from good 10' radius, cause critical wounds, slay living.*

Evil, wise, and crafty, the duke is a master of many languages, speaking common, undercommon, and several dialects of dwarvish and elvish. He attempts to negotiate if the PCs are posing a serious threat. He proposes the

kuo-toa and PCs join forces and destroy the drow (area **8**). He offers them both the pick of his own treasure hoard (he does not allow PCs to have a look first) and the pick of the drow hoard when they are conquered. He has no intention of keeping any deals, but he is willing to use PCs as allies in his war to control the city. He intends to let PCs do as much fighting as possible and either weaken themselves or weaken the drow. In either case, the kuo-toa win.

If the duke is informed that the PCs have already destroyed the drow, negotiations proceed more smoothly. (While overjoyed at the destruction of his enemies he fears those who did it.) In any case, he knows nothing of the *Shards of the Day* but does know of the shiny yellow blade hidden in the treasury (area **10B**). The kuo-toa hate the blade because of its bright light, but they value it as a magical item. They intend to trade it at the first opportunity. If PCs can force the issue by superior strength, the duke may trade the blade for the destruction of his hated drow enemy and a minimum of 10,000 gp worth of assorted treasure.

10B. Large Cellar. The cellars are below water level and the many minor cracks in their walls have allowed water to leak in and fill them. To investigate, the PCs must either use a *lower water* or *water breathing* spell (they may also use repeated dives holding their breath). This is the kuo-toan treasury and it is protected by multiple traps. The cellar appears to be empty save for a layer of grayish mud, but the treasure is concealed in two shallow pits beneath the silt. The pits are covered with a thick coat of mud and it is possible to walk across them without realizing they are there.

The kuo-toan duke has placed a special *glyph of warding* in the mud of the cellar's floor. The glyph erupts into a great whirlpool should any non–kuo-toa enter the room. All in the room must save vs. spell or be immediately swept off their feet and suffer 1d4 hp damage per round for 10 rounds as they are bounced off the walls, ceiling, and floor by the swirling water. A save reduces damage to half and those wearing a *ring of free action* automatically suffer only half-damage and may save for no damage. The swirling waters also disturb the layer of silt, clouding the water and reducing visibility to one foot. A *purify food and drink* spell or pouring a *potion of sweet water* into the muddied water instantly removes the murky cloud; however, this merely causes the silt to settle to the floor. If disturbed by combat or PCs attempting to dig up and remove it, it rises and fouls the water again. The silt settles naturally in 2d12+6 hours. If PCs have used a *lower water* spell, the *glyph* still erupts but the thin layer of swirling silt merely knocks victims down and inflicting 1d6 hp damage.

If the PCs find the pits, they discover the northernmost pit holds 3,500 gp worth of assorted gems and jewelry. In addition, there is a *ring of animal friendship* and a *ring of mind shielding*. The southernmost pit holds a *dagger +1*, 10 *bolts +1* for a drow hand crossbow, three potion decanters containing *healing*, *levitation*, and *water breathing*. They also find the *onyx dog figurine of wondrous power*. The kuo-toa, having never seen a dog, do not realize the power of the object and value it only for the onyx. As the PCs are uncovering these goodies read the following:

As you are removing the objects from the shallow pit, you keep thinking your eyes are playing tricks on you. Every now and then, there is glint of light from the bottom of the pit. It is not a gem or jewelry, but the murky silt does not allow a good look at the thing.

As the PCs pull the objects from the murk, one closes his hand on the hilt of a sword. The sword comes out of the pit with its hilt decorated with a fire opal and inset with the elder rune *Laebos*. There is no mistaking the glowing yellow blade. The PCs have recovered the *Shard of Noon*.

The third pit, located near the western wall, is a trap for the greedy. The kuo-toa have collected the powerful acidic fluids used by violet fungi to rot flesh and have placed a pool of this awful glop in the pit. Anyone scraping away the thick mud covering it releases it into the water (activating the *glyph of warding* does not uncover the pit sufficiently to release the fluid). This appears as a sudden up-rush of reddish-purple liquid from the pit in a 20' × 20' cloud. The enzymatic fluids are immediately diluted by the water and cease to rot flesh instantly. However, it does not render them harmless. Any victim within the cloud must either be cured by a *cure disease* spell or save vs. poison every round within the cloud or suffer 2d6 hp in acidlike burn damage. A successful save means the victim is affected as if by the rash version of an *irritation* spell. The cloud of enzymes dissipates and ceases to be harmful in one turn. If this happens after a *lower water* spell, the enzymes rush through the watery silt on the floor. Thus, damage remains the same but is confined to PCs' feet. At DM's option, this may cause a penalty to a victim's movement rate (–1d6 or –1 point of MV for every 2 hp of damage suffered).

10C. Small Cellar.

This room was the kitchen for the Lightkeeper's house, but it is now flooded. In the southern corner is a fire pit, the overhang of its chimney looking quite strange in the underwater confines of the cellar. From the shallow bowl of the fire pit comes an occasional glint and sparkle. As you move toward the fire pit, you see there are gems. A veritable pile of wealth, heaped into the crater of the dead oven. There are several rubies glinting on top and the white fire of diamonds sparkles from somewhere deep in the heap of precious stones.

Anyone fool enough to reach out and grab a handful of treasure is attacked by a crystal ooze the kuo-toa placed here as a guardian. The creature hides in the chimney a few feet above the fire pit and surprises anyone reaching for the gems on 1–4 on 1d10. It need only drop upon the hand and arm of anyone attempting to take one of the jewels and, in this case, gains a +2 to hit. The creature is not exactly enslaved by the kuo-toa; the duke uses the *ring of animal friendship* from the treasure in the large cellar (see area **9B**) to keep it from attacking. (If PCs find this ring before encountering the crystal ooze, they cannot possibly use it against the creature without first discovering that it is magical and run tests to discover just exactly what it does.) If the ooze is defeated, the PCs find that while the hoard appears to be worth thousands of gold pieces, it is actually only worth hundreds. The PCs find 800 gp worth of rubies and small diamonds and many worthless rhinestones and glass beads.

Crystal Ooze: AL N; AC 8; MV 1, swim 3; HD 4; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 4–16; SA paralyzing poison; SD immune to acid, cold, heat, fire, takes only 1 hp damage from weapons; SZ L; ML 10; XP 420; *MM*/278.

Concluding the Adventure

If PCs retrieve all the parts of the *Shards of the Day* from Dylvwyllynn, give the party a 50,000 XP story award for the recovery. In addition, the baron is overjoyed and immediately pays the promised reward with an extra 1,000 gp gem for each surviving PC thrown in for a job well done.

The PCs have won a powerful NPC for a friend that may be used hereafter as a source of information and political and economic intrigue. If the DM is using the *Night Below*, the baron can be used as one of the powerful "off-stage NPCs" suggested in that campaign. While he may not be personally that powerful himself, the baron knows everyone worth knowing and can arrange introductions and open doors that would otherwise be closed.

If PCs gain only part of the *Shards*, give each PC 2,000 XP per piece of the found. In this case, the baron is happy but merely pays the promised price with nothing extra. He remains friendly but clearly considers the job only half finished. The baron may allow PCs a second try at the city, but hires a few powerful NPCs to assist them. If such assistance is required, the reward is reduced substantially (DM's discretion).

If PCs have been wholly unsuccessful, they may sell their maps and knowledge of Dylvwyllynn to the baron (price is negotiable but should hardly cover expenses). If PCs recover but attempt to keep the *Shards*, the baron hires experienced thieves to steal it back.

As Dylvwyllynn is a mammoth underground city, the DM can create any number of adventures there. Planar creatures, especially slaadi slavers, baatezu, and tanar'ri may try to establish lairs and bases within the city. Liches and vampires find Dylvwyllynn a comfortable setting. There may even be an isolated pocket of descendants of the original dwarven inhabitants. Cut off for centuries, they might believe the world above is but a myth. And, of course, there is the endless traffic and discourse on the Underdark. Ω

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NEMESIS

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

Hell hath no fury...

Artwork and Cartography by Rob Lazzaretti

Chris writes: "My first PLANESCAPE™ adventure ('Umbra,' in issue #55) generated a lot of reader response. I hope this adventure does the same. Special thanks to Stephen Daniele for inspiring me to write this Abysmal tale."

"Nemesis" is a PLANESCAPE™ adventure for 4–7 PCs of levels 9–12 (about 60 total levels). While the module begins in the planar city of Sigil, most of the action takes place in Vudra, a layer of the Abyss. DMs not running PLANESCAPE campaigns can supplant Sigil with a Prime Material equivalent, provided the chosen city isn't too clean and orderly. Things unique to the Cage, like razorvine, may be changed or removed; tieflings can be replaced with half-elves; the dabus and Sigil's factions can become local religious cults, guilds, or secret societies.

Before refereeing this module, the DM should review *A DM Guide to the Planes* (pages 8–17) in the PLANESCAPE boxed set, as well as the *The Book of Chaos* (pages 12–25) in the *Planes of Chaos* boxed set (or in the *Manual of the Planes*). Several spells and magical items have altered effects in the Abyss.

FOR THE • DUNGEON MASTER •

Trikante the Incantifer once wrote of Vudra as "a dismal agglomeration of tropical islands choked with impenetrable jungles and surrounded by oceans of heaving blood." Few have described the 531st layer of the Abyss quite so eloquently. Governed by the *mariliths* — the snake-bodied, six-armed generals of the Blood War — Vudra is regarded as one of the most dreadful domains. Its ruler is a marilith of gargantuan proportions, with flaming red eyes and skin of blackest night. Known to her minions as Shaktari, this dark fiend is said to devour all that she sees, although she spends most of her time "sleeping" in the crimson oceans of her realm.

Each of Shaktari's marilith vassals commands her own "island." Although each quietly considers herself the true ruler of Vudra, all pay deference to the six-armed Queen of Poison. Kaliva is among the most feared and despised of her kind. Like all mariliths, Kaliva believes her kind are the true force behind the Blood Wars, but Kaliva is far from an ordinary tanar'ri.

Kaliva was born not a marilith but a human. She was raised by an evil duke who trained her as a fighter. Her proudest accomplishment was beheading a paladin who led a charge against her father's castle. Since then, she's always held a fascination for beheading her enemies. Later, when the duke was accused of treason and the king's army besieged the castle, Kaliva fought her way to freedom and fled the kingdom. Eager to make a name for herself, she turned mercenary. Almost immediately, she was hired by a powerful wizard named Nalen Blackstar and became his henchman.

Nalen's lust for Kaliva became increasingly evident, yet she rejected him at every turn. Their association ended bitterly, and the angry Nalen used a powerful *shapechange* spell to transform Kaliva into a hideous rutterkin tanar'ri. Nalen then banished Kaliva to the Abyss, where he assumed she would be enslaved or destroyed. Kaliva's keen mind and superior fighting skills, however, enabled her to stave off the attacks of other abyssal fiends. Her survival did not go unrewarded, and Kaliva grew in power. Eventually she obtained a tanar'ric form that not only befitted her personality but also mocked her once considerable beauty. She became a marilith, with all the abilities commensurate to her station.

Kaliva has devoted considerable time to plotting the demise of Nalen Blackstar, and not just for revenge. She can find no way to undo the wizard's magic and has grown accustomed to her tanar'ric form. Capitalizing on her banishment, Kaliva carved out a niche for herself and earned the dread of lesser tanar'ri under her command. However, her secret isn't safe so long as Nalen Blackstar lives! If rival mariliths were to uncover the truth about her past, they would undoubtedly use the knowledge against her. For this reason, her secret must remain hidden forever. To that end, Kaliva plans to kill Nalen who, to her knowledge, resides somewhere in Sigil or possibly in the Outlands. (See the PLANESCAPE boxed set for details on these regions.)

If the Blood Wars have taught Kaliva anything, it's the importance of preparation. Skilled beyond compare with the blade, Kaliva has devoted the last several months to acquiring the most powerful armament imaginable — swords that she believes will give her the "edge" in a battle with Nalen (and any competing tanar'ri who stand in her way). After months of careful research, and with the help of her unfailing henchman, Kaliva has decided which blades will be hers.

Although she has magical weapons of lesser power, Kaliva wants four of the most dangerous swords ever forged. So far, Raja Khan (her rakshasa henchman) has retrieved three of them: *Starzad,* a vorpal scimitar; *Ffazablur,* a bastard sword of unparalleled quickness; and *Wizardbane,* a long sword that endows its wielder with additional magic resistance. Soon, the fourth blade will fall into her clutches: *Midnight,* a broad sword that drains the life force from its victim. Once all the weapons are in her possession, the banished marilith intends to track down and destroy her old nemesis.

All four swords have one thing in common: until recently, they were all located somewhere in Sigil. With the help of several *charmed* spies, Raja Khan has carefully tracked each sword over the last several months.

The first sword, *Ffazablur,* was taken by Raja Khan after its guardian (a dabus) fell prey to a *phantasmal killer* spell that the rakshasa cast from a scroll.

To obtain the second sword, *Wizardbane,* Raja *charmed* a mage's apprentice and commanded him to remove it from his master's tower. (The apprentice disappeared shortly thereafter.)

The third blade, *Starzad,* was stolen from the Armory, headquarters of Sigil's infamous Doomguard. The thief was a talented tiefling named Llisian Slitterknife, whom Raja hired and later killed.

The adventure begins when the PCs are hired by Salja Slitterknife, Llisian's sister, to find clues of her brother's whereabouts. The PCs may know Salja as the tiefling waitress at The Black Sail, a seedy tavern featured in "Umbra" (*DUNGEON® Adventures* #55).

Shortly after the PCs conclude their meeting with Salja at the Black Sail, Raja acquires the fourth blade — the broad sword *Midnight* — from a vault deep within Sigil's Hall of Records. The Hall serves as headquarters for the Takers, members of a faction called the Fated. Raja snatches the blade with the unwitting help of a young records clerk named Warrin Spellbinder, whom the PCs encounter while searching for Salja's brother in the Hive.

THE SLITTERKNIFE • SIBLINGS •

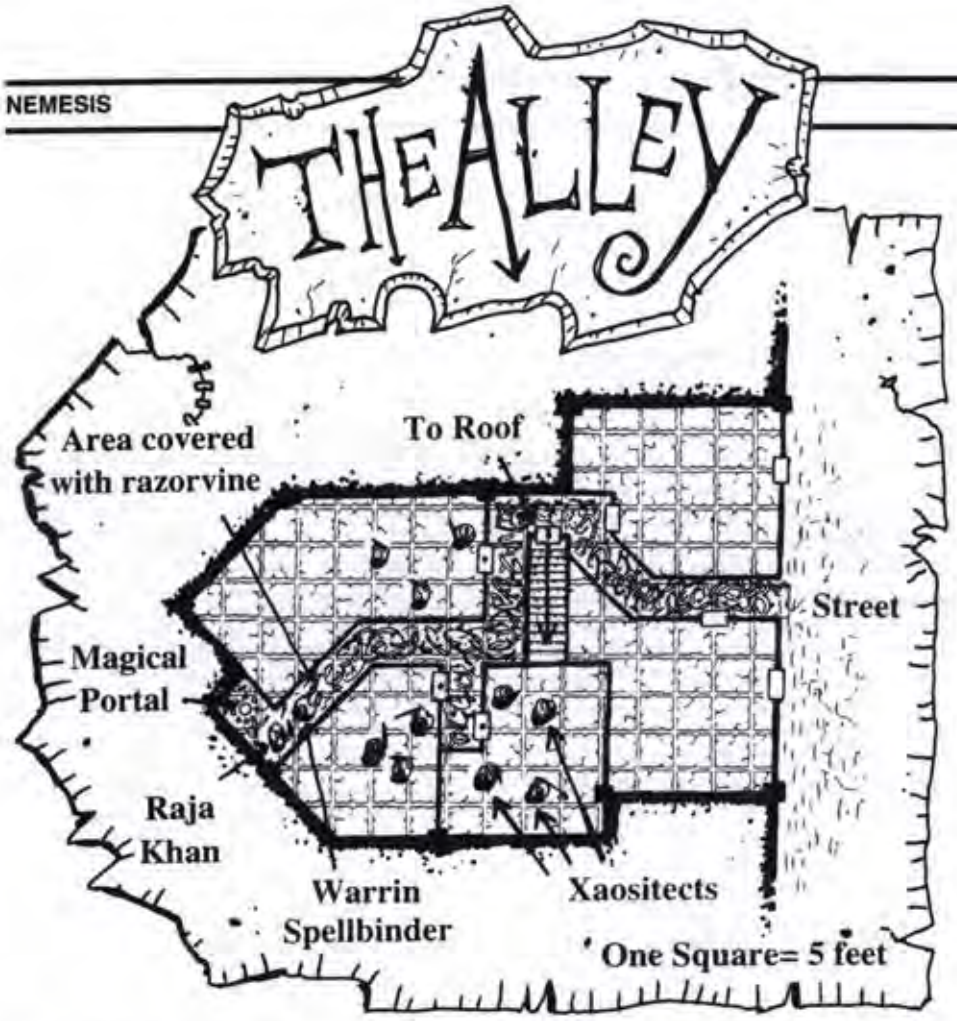
The adventure begins at the Black Sail, a tavern in Sigil's Lower Ward. The tavern is a familiar haven to PCs who survived the perils of "Umbra." A detailed description of the Black Sail is provided in "Umbra" and in TSR's adventure *The Eternal Boundary.*

While visiting the Black Sail, the PCs meet a young tiefling waitress named Salja Slitterknife. If Salja knows the PCs, she seats them in a private alcove and wastes no time asking for their assistance. (See "The Missing Tiefling" below.) If the PCs are first-time visitors, Salja allows them to find their own seats in the common area, takes their orders, then hands one PC a paper slip with the following message written on it:

> *If you cutters want a job, meet me in the alley behind the Sail at the end of my shift. I'll be waiting with the jink — No peelers.*
>
> *S.*

After she finishes her shift, Salja waits in the alley behind the tavern. If the PCs show no interest in helping her, she tries to bribe them with her magical ring (which she took from the finger of a drunk). She'll offer the ring as a reward if the PCs find her brother. Salja is very streetwise and not easily duped. She also has a "boyfriend" at the tavern — a swill-drinking cornugon baatezu named Horrn. The cornugon was tricked into donning a *hat of stupidity* and is now cursed with low Intelligence (7). Horrn is a drooling admirer of Salja's, and the tiefling keeps him on a short leash. He is not one of The Black Sail's more popular patrons, and Salja isn't really fond of him. Nevertheless, if the PCs give Salja a hard time, she whistles to Horrn and lets him rearrange the nearest PC's face. The DM should devise statistics for the cornugon if and when they become necessary.

Salja Slitterknife (female tiefling): INT very; AL N; AC 7 (Dexterity); MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 19; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (stilettos); SA poison; SD +2 to save vs. electricity, fire and poison; half damage from cold; SZ M; ML 11; XP 650; *PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*/112; two stilettos in scabbards (lined with Type O poison), *amulet of finding* (hidden under clothing), *ring of regeneration.*



The Missing Tiefling

Salja is the sister of Llisian Slitterknife, the tiefling whom Raja hired to steal *Starzad*. Llisian is missing, and Salja needs the party's help to find him. Salja and Llisian are tiefling twins, and as such their emotional bond is particularly strong. Their father, a rogue tanar'ri, provided his two children with identical *amulets of finding* (see *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™*, vol. I, page 32). The amulets work in tandem; by concentrating on the image of her brother, Salja can see through Llisian's medallion. Similarly, Llisian can see through his sister's *amulet*. Out of mutual concern for their well-being, the twins promised to use the *amulets of finding* to keep track of one another.

Salja recently lost contact with her brother. Taking a break from her shift, she gazed into her amulet and saw a disturbing image: a distorted tiger's face followed a blinding flash of light. She tells the PCs that the *amulets of finding* can function only when both are present in the same plane of existence. If one is taken to another plane, both *amulets* temporarily cease to function.

Salja knows her brother would never leave Sigil, for the Cage is where both siblings agreed to conduct their business. Fearing the worst, Salja believes that someone may have killed Llisian and taken his *amulet*. She wants the PCs to track down her brother — rescuing him if possible or, at the very least, retrieving his magical medallion.

If the PCs agree to help Salja, she tells them her brother's last-known whereabouts. Llisian had recently pilfered a sword from the Armory and was slumming around the Hive, not too far from the Gatehouse (headquarters of the Xaositects). Salja tells the PCs that Llisian had many contacts in the Hive and did most of his business there. She knows her brother is responsible for stealing *Starzad* and regards theft as a necessity for survival in the Cage. If questioned about Llisian's practice, she replies: "It ain't exactly dark, cutter. Sometimes you gotta take what you want and pray you don't get scragged! Sometimes that means you gotta peel leatherheads for a living."

Salja doesn't know who paid Llisian to steal the sword, nor is she acquainted with any of his associates. She did, however, see Llisian waiting in the shadow of an iron bariaur statue. Salja was astute enough to recognize the Gatehouse looming in the background. Perhaps a clue to her brother's whereabouts can be found near the statue or Gatehouse.

♦ IN THE HIVE ♦

If the PCs agree to help Salja, they must search for signs of Llisian in the Hive. Salja cannot provide names of specific places, since Llisian was known to frequent dozens of establishments.

The Hive Ward is a chaotic sprawl of tightly-packed structures and disease-ridden slums. During the day, petty thieves and lost people roam the streets. At night, cranium rats come out to play, drunken bubbers litter the slimy back-alleys, and horned shapes linger in the shadows. The Dustmen haunt the crowded streets, filling their wagons with the carcasses of the dead before shuffling back to the Mortuary. Disorderly Chaosmen (Xaositects) roam in packs, creating disturbances and lynching clueless leatherheads.

The Battling Bariaur

No one in the Hive seems to know Llisian Slitterknife's current whereabouts. However, any slummer can direct the PCs to the square containing the Battling Bariaur, one of Sigil's many crude landmarks. The iron statue stands 12' tall and captures the bariaur in a fighting pose, clutching a glaive. The statue's brimstone pedestal is surrounded by a garden of neatly-trimmed razorvine. If the PCs remain near the statue for three or more rounds, they hear a cry for help from a nearby alley.

Saving Warrin

> A terrified cry escapes from a darkened alley. You hear a feeble voice deep within the alley, desperately pleading for mercy. "Take the sword! I won't tell anyone! I swear by the Lady of Pain!"

A map of "The Alley" is provided for the DM's reference. This encounter takes place in a condemned section of the Hive overrun by the barmy Xaositects. The buildings that enclose the alley are normally deserted, but not when the PCs arrive.

Raja Khan has lured Warrin Spellbinder into the razorvine-covered alley and turned on him. The rakshasa has assumed its true form, eager to see the clerk's eyes swell with terror. If the PCs investigate, their sudden arrival is enough to startle Raja and drive him away. The rakshasa uses a magical gate-key to escape through the unseen portal to the Abyss. The portal snaps shut the instant Raja is through. Covering Raja's escape are 10 hired Xaositects who lurk in the adjacent buildings (see below).

A 12' thick canopy of razorvine has formed 10' above the alley. The razorvine is not dangerous unless the PCs try to fly, climb, or leap through it. The canopy does render the alley unnaturally dark, although slivers of light provide just enough illumination to discern the alley's course.

Several of the doors that lead into the adjacent tenements are locked from the inside. Behind three of the doors lurk 10 hired Xaositects: humans *charmed* by Raja Khan. If Raja calls for them, the Xaositects respond immediately. Unless they are disturbed, they remain hidden behind the locked doors.

Raja's invisible portal to the Abyss lies at the end of the alley. If the PCs explore the alley, they eventually come face-to-face with the rakshasa and his quarry. Read or paraphrase the following when they near the end of the darkened alley:

> Barely visible at the back of the alley is a broad-shouldered figure clutching a dull black sword. The shape looks like a large man with a bestial head. Slumped by the figure's feet, a much smaller shape pleads for its life.
>
> "Pathetic vermin," grumbles the towering figure. "It's time to pay the music!" As the ominous figure raises the sword, his cowering quarry buckles with dread.

Raja plans to slay Warrin, haul the corpse back to the Abyss, dispose of the evidence, and offer Kaliva the clerk's head as a souvenir. The party's untimely arrival forces Raja to abandon his plans. He activates the portal at the back of the alley using a secret gate-key (see below) and walks through. The rakshasa cannot risk losing the sword at this time, and he prefers not to fight unfamiliar opponents. That task he leaves to the 10 Xaositect bashers hiding in the nearby tenements.

Raja Khan (rakshasa rukh): INT high; AL LE; AC –5; MV 18; HD 8+16; hp 69; THAC0 11; #AT 3 or 2; Dmg 1d6+4/1d6+4/2d10 or by weapon ×2 (+4 Dmg bonus with 18/78 Strength); SA illusion, spells (cast at 9th level); SD +2 weapons to hit (weapons below +4 inflict half damage); MR immune to spells lower than 8th-level; SZ M; ML 17; XP 8,000; *MM*/299 (Rakshasa, greater); *Midnight, ring of mind shielding, potion of flying.*

Raja's wizard spells: *charm person, shocking grasp, unseen servant; darkness 15' radius, improved phantasmal force, invisibility; slow, wraithform.*

Raja's priest spells: *cure light wounds, protection from good, cause fear.*

Raja carries *Midnight* (fully detailed in the "Kaliva's Swords" sidebar). Raja also wears a *ring of mind shielding* taken from the dead Llisian Slitterknife. In addition to the magical sword and ring, Raja also carries a gate-key for the portal leading to the first layer of the Abyss. The gate-key is a live ophidian: a snake that Raja keeps in a bronze, ornamental tube secured to his waist. The snake is not "consumed" like a spell component; however, the portal is one-way only. PCs entering the Abyss via this gate must find some other way out. (Raja has access to another portal that leads back to Sigil, but the PCs cannot locate it at this time.)

"ARE YOU GUYS, LIKE, THE RED DEATH?"

— WARRIN SPELLBINDER, MISTAKING THE PCS FOR MERCYKILLERS

The portal remains open for only one round, but it can be snapped shut instantly simply by killing the snake. (To do this, Raja takes hold of the bronze tube while casting his *shocking grasp* spell; the snake is ordinary and has only 2 hp.) If by chance the PCs manage to slip through the open portal, Raja attacks them on the other side — in the Plain of Infinite Portals (see "Through the Portal").

Xaositects (10 *charmed* human fighters): INT average; AL CE; AC 6 (7 without shield); MV 12; F4; hp 25 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8 (battle axe) or 1d3+1/ 1d3+1 (punching); SD cast *babble* (opposite of *tongues*) once/week; ML 14; XP 120; studded leather armor, shield, battle axe, pouch of coins (2d10 gp each).

Xaositects do not speak like other Cagers. Their speech is skewered and jumbled to the point of being incomprehensible. A *comprehend languages* spell may be used to decode their speech. The Chaosmen know that the portal leads to the Abyss. They do not know how the portal is opened or closed. Although they have watched Raja assume other humanoid forms, they do not understand what he is exactly, nor do they know his weaknesses. The Xaositects are here to keep the PCs occupied while Raja flees through the portal.

If five or more Xaositects are slain, the survivors must make a successful morale check or flee. While Raja is present, the Xaositects fight to the death.

Warrin Spellbinder (human): AL LN; AC 4; MV 12; W4; hp 5 (16 at full); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 9, D 15, C 14, I 16, W 8, Ch 9; ML 7; spell book, *cloak of protection +2, bracers of defense AC 7, ring of fire resistance, dagger +3;* spells: *burning hands, protection from evil, unseen servant; pyrotechnics, wizard lock.*

Warrin is a low-ranking member of the Fated and a clerk in the Hall of Records. Knowing the command words to deactivate the vault's magical traps, Warrin was duped into helping Raja Khan steal the sword after mistaking him for one of his superiors. Without asking any questions, Warrin allowed the rakshasa to remove the blade and leave the vault unscathed. Once outside the Hall of Records, Raja Khan ordered the young mage to accompany him on a "special mission" into the Hive. Seeing this as an opportunity to improve his standing and his reputation, the timid clerk followed Raja through the streets and back-alleys of Sigil. Little did Warrin suspect that the rakshasa was leading him to his death.

If he survives the rakshasa's attack, Warrin offers the PCs his profound thanks. Warrin is not a gifted magic-user, and his association with the Fated was prompted by two factors. First and foremost, his mother Eurayle was a member of the Fated before she perished in the Outland burg of Plague-Mort. With his mother gone, Warrin inherited a fair amount of personal wealth. Among the items she left behind were several spell-keys — devices that

enabled certain spells to function on certain planes. In exchange for the spell-keys, the Takers granted Warrin membership.

Warrin rarely visits the Hive and is not familiar with Llisian Slitterknife. Warrin is eager to see *Midnight* safely returned to the faction's headquarters in the Hall of Records, preferably before its absence is detected. In exchange for the PCs' help, he offers them a portion of his inheritance. Unwilling to part with his mother's remaining magical items, Warrin offers the party a signed pact arranged between his mother and an agathinon, granting the owner of the pact one special favor. See "Warrin's Reward" for details.

By tracking down the rakshasa, Warrin hopes to retrieve *Midnight* and redeem himself before his superiors discover the theft. Time is of the essence, so Warrin intends to follow the rakshasa through the portal (or send brave adventurers on his behalf), but first he needs to locate a proper gate-key.

The portal opens whenever a live snake is brought within 5' of it. However, Warrin did not see Raja with a snake. Raja simply kept the metal snake-tube secured to his waist, walked within range, and whoosh! — the portal appeared. The same thing happens if the PCs somehow identify the proper gate-key and bring it within 5' of the portal. *Commune* spells can be used to identify the proper gate-key for this portal, but see below.

"'WORMS ARE FISHING... UPSIDE-DOWN... MAN BREAKS WIND... DON'T EAT THE CHEESE?' — NO. WAIT. THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT!"

— WARRIN, TRYING TO INTERPRET A REBUS

• THE DABUS •

Warrin obviously needs healing, and he graciously thanks anyone who takes the time to help him. As Warrin and the PCs leave the alley, the DM should read or paraphrase the following:

> Emerging from the alley, you see three peculiar humanoids approach. These slender beings have short grey horns portruding from their foreheads, and tall manes of wispy-white hair. They are dressed in ornate grey robes and hover slightly above the ground. Despite their freakish appearance, there is something oddly majestic in their countenances. They drift toward you, their expressions immutable. Suddenly, various symbols begin to appear in the air around them. The symbols materialize one after the other, coming together in rows to form some kind of cryptic message.

These three mysterious beings are called dabus. Dabus are the caretakers of Sigil — seldom troubled by the other occupants of the Cage because of their "arcane powers." Dabus do not speak; rather, they communicate using symbols and images that simply appear in the air around them, forming strings or sentences called rebuses. The dabus do not communicate often — only when the need arises.

Years ago, the dabus took possession of a magical bastard sword called *Ffazablur*. The weapon, once owned by an evil tanar'ri, was seized after the tanar'ri was sent to the Mazes by the Lady of Pain. One dabus was entrusted to guard the sword, for fear the weapon might someday be used to bring harm to members of its race. Recently, however, this dabus was slain by a *phantasmal killer* cast by Raja Khan.

Three dabus were later assigned to locate the murderer.

The dabus want the stolen bastard sword returned. Although they harbor no desire for vengeance, they know exactly how rakshasas can be killed (a blessed crossbow bolt), they know how Raja Khan leaves Sigil, and they have the knowledge and a gate-key to activate the portal. (As custodians of Sigil, the dabus are aware of just about every portal in the Cage.) Dabus are bound to the Cage and cannot depart Sigil under any circum-stances. No dabus can leave or be taken from the Cage by any means. For this reason, the dabus need someone to track down the missing sword.

The three dabus who approach the party have been "sent" to provide the PCs with the gate-key for opening the magical portal. There is no explicable reason why they select the PCs for the quest, other than the fact the PCs are already involved in tracking down the rakshasa and the stolen sword(s).

Each dabus communicates one rebus to the party. The DM may reveal the rebuses to the players at the appropriate time. PCs should be given a chance to interpret the rebuses on their own. (Luckily for them, the dabus are patient and accustomed to allowing plenty of time for slower-witted species to decipher their messages.) If the PCs seem to be struggling, Warrin can step in to assist. A native of the Cage, Warrin is familiar with the dabus and their method of communication, and he has received special training in the "art" of deciphering rebuses.

Once the party has translated the rebuses, the dabus hand the PCs a scroll. The scroll depicts Kaliva's island, where the rakshasa is thought to dwell. The DM should give the players their copy of the island map at this time. The dabus paid handsomely to acquire this map, but they do not reveal where they acquired it. The dabus also carry a 9" square obsidian coffer containing a harmless, living snake. When the snake is brought within 5' of the portal, the portal opens.

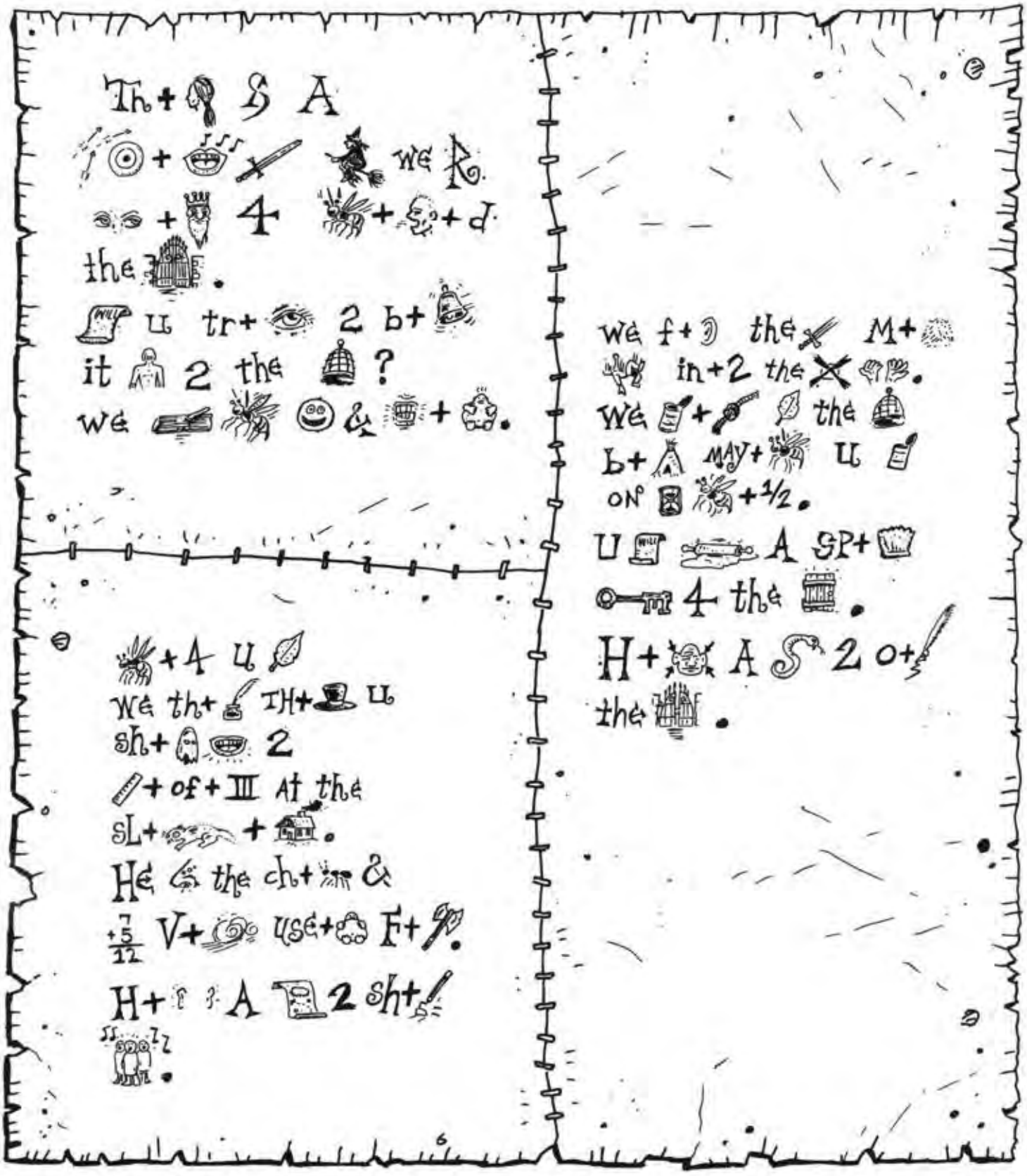
The dabus offer no tangible reward for completing the quest, although Warrin is quick to point out that dabus rarely make requests to other species and that such circumstances should be handled carefully. "Better than a one-way ticket to the Mazes!" Warrin adds hastily.

Dabus (3): INT very ; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 7; hp 43, 40, 32; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD limited spell immunity; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12; XP 650; *PMC*/10; long sword (hidden under robes).

• RULE OF THREE •

If the PCs interpret the third dabus' rebus correctly, they should pay a visit to a local tanar'ri named Rule-of-Three. For a fiend, Rule-of-Three is a decent sort. The party can find him at The Slaughterhouse, a squalid tavern deep in the Hive. When he learns the PCs have been sent by the dabus, he's more than happy to give them the chant about survival in the Abyss.

Warrin is unacquainted with the Hive Ward and cannot guide the PCs to Rule-of-Three, and the dabus have other things to do besides lead the PCs



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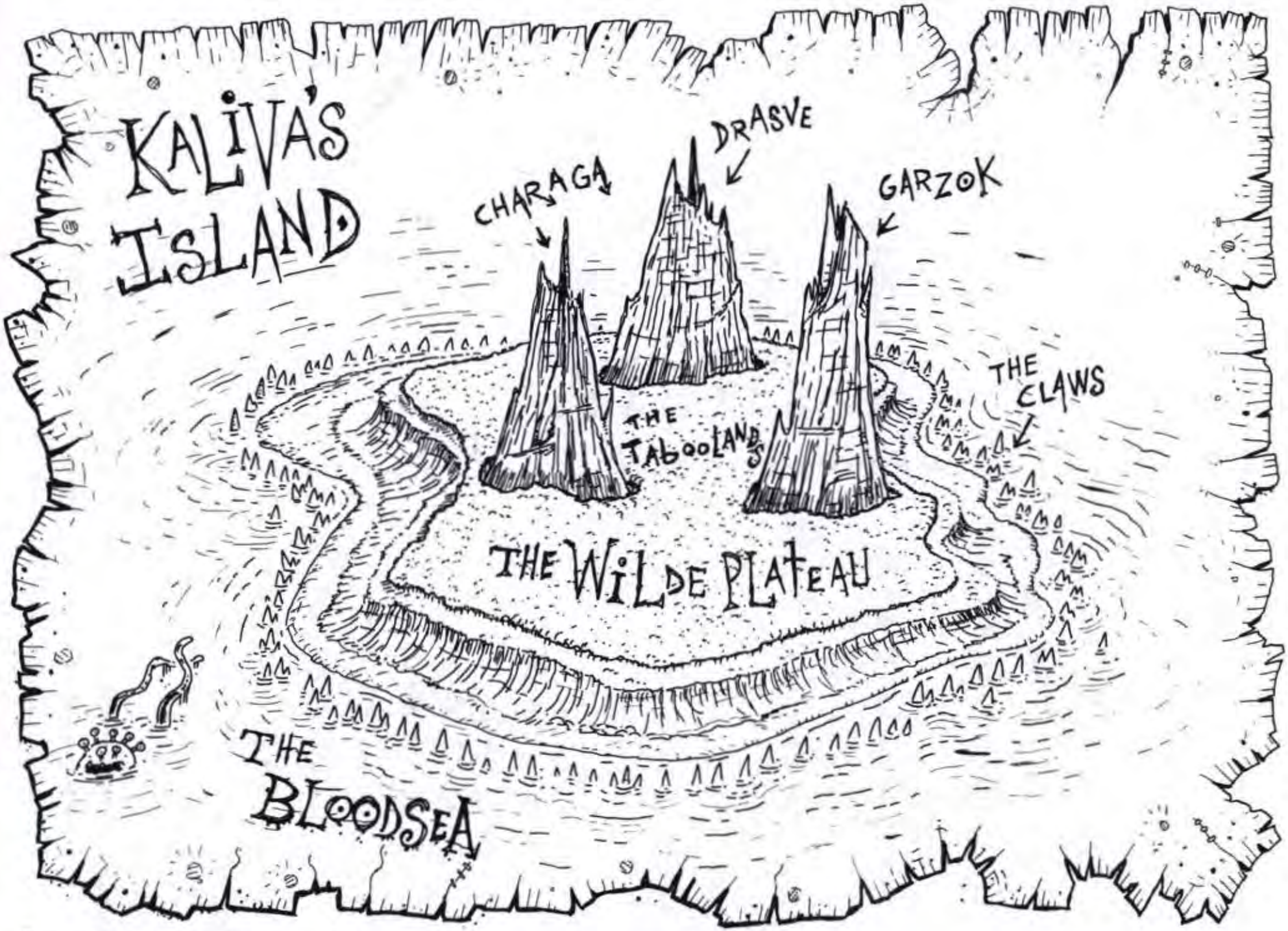

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everywhere; however, an invisible quasit named Zilbog is nearby, overhears them, and offers to guide the party to the Slaughterhouse in exchange for a mug of viperwine (a poisonous tanar'ric concoction that the PCs can purchase at the inn).

The quasit recently turned stag on its master and is no longer the wizard's familiar. With regards to the PCs, Zilbog has no hidden agenda apart from satisfying its viperwine addiction. If the PCs prove they are a tolerant and abiding bunch, the quasit might offer to accompany them as a guide, provided they continue to support its bad habits (of which it has several).

Zilbog (quasit): INT low; AL CE; AC 2; MV 15; HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d2/1d2/1d4; SA poisonous claws; SD regenerate 1 hp/round; fear blast; turn invisible, *detect good* or *detect magic* at will; harmed only by iron or magical weapons; saves as 7-HD monster; immune to fire, cold and lightning; MR 25%; SZ T; ML 8; XP 2,000; *MC*/201 (Imp) or *PMC*/56 (Imp).

Zilbog can assume the form of a large bat or a giant centipede.

At the Slaughterhouse

The Slaughterhouse is a favorite hangout for most of the lowlifes who dwell in the Hive. The 'house serves an assortment of beverages including viperwine, a rancid substance enjoyed by the quasit Zilbog. Viperwine is deadly to all non-tanar'ri. (Quasits are considered a lower form of tanar'ri.) Treat as Type F poison, with –6 to the save if the liquid is taken deliberately.

An awful stench fills the interior of the Slaughterhouse — a blackened multi-story edifice wedged between two other buildings. There is only one floor inside, most of it taken up by an iron cage. Within the cage, two muscular humanoids are fighting a pitched battle for survival while a small horde of spectators congregate along the perimeter to gamble on who will be victorious. At the moment, a human gladiator is being pummeled by a slightly-taller fiend with black ooze seeping from its pores (a farastu gehreleth).

Attached to the walls of the Slaughterhouse are scaffolds that climb all the way up to the roof. The scaffolds are weighted down by dozens of patrons seated at tables or clinging to the webwork of metal supports.

Rule-of-Three can be found on the fifth tier of the scaffold. One of the bouncers (a peery minotaur named Vaargh) points to Rule-of-Three's location if the PCs give him a bribe of 50 gp or more. PCs can climb onto a corner elevator connected to a series of ropes, counter-weights and pulleys. By some unseen force, the lift is clamorously hoisted up to the fifth tier. A group of Xaositect bashers watch them from a nearby table, but they do not oppose the party. Thanks to his *polymorph self* ability, Rule-of-Three resembles a horned dwarf with a benign, grandfatherly countenance. He is paying no attention to the fight below. He is presently engaged in a riveting (though one-sided) conversation with a female tiefling of considerable beauty.

"THREE SIDES +⊕ EVERY ARGUMEN+. CU++ER. +HE RIGH+ SIDE. +HE WR⊕NG SIDE. AND ⊓Y SIDE."
— RULE-⊕F-THREE'S +HIRD RULE-⊕F-+HUMB

Rule-of-Three is, in truth, a marquis cambion and a "retired" army recruiter for the Blood War. He came to Sigil after a falling out with his superiors and elected to remain in the Cage to conduct business (or so the cambion claims; see "Paying the Price" below). Rule-of-Three likes meeting people, making contacts, and sharing his wealth of knowledge about the Abyss with any basher willing to pay the price. Watching his back are three well-paid minotaur bouncers.

Rule-of-Three (marquis cambion): AL NE; AC –2; MV 15; HD 6; hp 42; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon +7 (strength bonus); S 19 (+3, +7), D 17, C 15, I 15, W 13, Ch 20; SA spell-like abilities; SD thief abilities; tanar'ri immunities; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 6,000; *PMC*/98; *eye of seeing, dagger of venom +3, leather armor +3, ring of protection +4, ring of shooting stars.*

Spell-like abilities (cast at 6th level): *charm person* (at will), *detect magic, fear* (by touch), *polymorph self* (3 times per day).

Vaargh, Snurz, and **Bhalog** (minotaurs): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 7+3; hp 58, 55, 51; THAC0 13; #AT 1 (head butt) or 2 (bite/weapon); Dmg 2d4 or 1d4/by weapon type +4; SA grapple, charge; SD +2 bonus to surprise rolls; SZ L (8' tall); ML 13; XP 2,000; *MM*/252 (modified). Each minotaur clutches a *javelin of lightning.*

Rule-of-Three is joined by Turia, the humorless tiefling first encountered in "Umbra." Turia is an agent of the Doomguard sent to find *Starzad*, the magical scimitar stolen from the Armory. Turia knows the identity of the thief, Llisian Slitterknife, but can't find any clues to his current whereabouts. She thought the cambion would have a good idea, but so far he's wasted her time questioning the ideals of the Doomguard philosophy. In truth, Rule-of-Three knows next-to-nothing about Llisian and the scimitar, but he is too taken with Turia's beauty to let her leave.

Note: If Turia was killed in "Umbra," replace her with Gwynzir, a female tiefling with comparable statistics. Instead of a magical shortsword, Gwynzir employs a *dagger of armor piercing* (see *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA*, vol. II, page 356). Instead of magical boots, she wears *gauntlets of ogre power.* Gwynzir's armor is stained deep red.

Turia (female tiefling): AL NE; AC 0; MV 12; F7; hp 55; THAC0 13 (11 with *long sword +1* and *shortsword +1*); #AT 2 or 5/2 (per weapon); Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength), +2 (specialization); S 16 (+0/+1), D 16, C 13, I 12, W 8, Ch 10; SA poison; SD +2 to save vs. fire, electricity and poison; half damage from cold; ML 14; XP 3,000; *PMC*/112; *slender long sword +1* (specialized), *short sword +1* (coated with Type E poison, good for two successful attacks), *plate mail +1* (stained deep blue), *boots of striding and springing,* three crystal vials (each containing one application of oily, Type E poison). Turia is ambidextrous and uses two weapons without penalty.

While listening to the cambion's babble, Turia drinks from a cup of deadly viperwine. (Prior to buying the drink, Turia imbibed a vial of antidote to counter the viperwine's lethality.) The tiefling keeps her ears attuned to any mention of *Starzad* or other missing blades. If she suspects that Llisian Slitterknife took *Starzad* into the Abyss, she offers to join the party in pursuit, intent on retrieving the sword for her faction. Turia is fearless to a fault and has no qualms about joining the PCs on

their dangerous excursion. If the PCs decline her assistance, she follows them anyway and defends herself if attacked.

If Zilbog is with the party, the quasit quickly cozies up to Turia. She reluctantly adopts the quasit as her companion, allowing it to finish off her glass of viperwine. The two gradually become inseparable. Zilbog is not the tiefling's familiar, so Turia inherits none of the quasit's special abilities or hindrances as a result of their collaboration.

Learning the Rule of Three

When the PCs inform Rule-of-Three of their quest and their encounter with the dabus, the cambion looks intrigued and supplies the following theory:

> "It cannot be a coincidence that three magical swords have vanished from Sigil. First, a sword named *Midnight* is taken from the Hall of Records — seized by some outer-planar beast. Then, out of nowhere, three dabus approach you with a mission to retrieve another stolen blade. Finally, there's my lovely companion, Turia, who is also searching for a lost sword — this one a finely-wrought scimitar. This is indeed a puzzle worthy of our investigation. Since your quest has become of special interest to me, I will tell you what you need to know for one modest fee."

The "fee" for Rule-of-Three's information is detailed under "Paying the Price."

What Rule-of-Three Knows

The cambion recommends that the PCs stay awhile. He knows three things about the plane of Vudra, which he's more than happy to reveal:

I. "Beware the jungles of Vudra. They are populated by tribes of barlgura and other dangerous fiends."

II. "Vudra is known as the plane of poison. Its oceans flow with the blood of many poisonous creatures, and the air is toxic! Beware what you eat, drink, and breathe."

III. "Vudra is ruled by a gargantuan marilith named Shaktari. Shaktari sleeps at the bottom of the bloodsea, entrusting her vassals — the mariliths — to govern the plane. The cross-trading mariliths constantly vie for control of Vudra, hatching schemes to usurp each other's power."

Rule-of-Three has no immediate access to poison cures, but he can provide the PCs with a list of three dealers in Sigil known to sell such things for a hefty price. Although Rule-of-Three claims these dealers are reliable, careless PCs might end up with a batch of cheap elixirs that do nothing!

If the cambion is shown the dabus' map of Vudra, Rule-of-Three recognizes Kaliva's island and offers the following three pieces of information:

I. "The island is home to one of the most feared of Shaktari's vassals — the marilith Kaliva. To satisfy her taste for blood, Kaliva sends her lackeys to hunt for victims, most of whom are taken from the Prime Material plane."

II. "The island is home to scores of humanoid natives brought to Vudra by Kaliva's minions. Those who are not drained of blood survive by drinking a magical fluid called Shaktari's Ichor. From time to time, this scum gushes from the bowels of the plane. If you can find a reservoir, Shaktari's Ichor will protect you from Vudra's lethal poisons."

III. "To reach Kaliva's island, you must first enter the Plain of Infinite Portals and say Shaktari's name to the guard standing to the left of the Bridge of Skulls. But be warned! The guard on the right is not to be spoken to."

Apart from the above information, Rule-of-Three knows little else about the perils of Vudra. He does, however, know a fair deal about tanar'ri. The DM is referred to the *Planes of Chaos* boxed set (pages 8 and 9 of *The Travelogue*) and *In the Cage: A Guide to Sigil* (page 56) for information on Rule-of-Three and his facts about tanar'ri. He is also intimately familiar with the altered effects of spells and magical items in the Abyss, for which the DM should again refer to the PLANESCAPE and *Planes of Chaos* boxed sets.

Paying the Price

Unknown to the PCs, Rule-of-Three has a personal stake in the party's quest. The cambion is not in Sigil merely to "conduct business" as previously noted; he was hired by the wizard Nalen Blackstar, Kaliva's nemesis, some time ago. Nalen never lost interest in Kaliva, and he has devoted considerable time and magical energy to spying on the marilith over the years. Nalen knows Kaliva is behind the theft of four magical swords; he provided the dabus with a detailed map of Kaliva's island and asked the dabus to lead the PCs to Rule-of-Three.

None of the information that Rule-of-Three provides is free. The cambion expects something from the PCs in return, which he mentions just before the party prepares to leave the Slaughterhouse:

> "I ask, humbly, that you bring me a souvenir from Vudra. The marilith Kaliva has an item in her possession that I desire. The item is called a *necklace of Shaktari*. Each of Shaktari's vassals wears one as a symbol of her loyalty to the Queen of Poison. Kaliva's necklace is made of platinum and adorned with three fire-breathing serpents. I consider it sufficient payment for the valuable information I have shared with you."

If the PCs reject Rule-of-Three's request, the sporting cambion agrees to drop the demand if one of the PC fighters concedes to a fight with Graxagal, the farastu gehreleth seen in the Slaughterhouse's central cage. The gehreleth has just pounded the life out of its human challenger and is always looking for new foes. The challenge need not be held right away; after all, the PCs will need all their strength to overcome the dangers in the Abyss. However, if the PCs return from the Abyss without the *necklace of Shaktari*, Rule-of-Three expects to see the strongest PC fighter take on the gehreleth (for whom the DM may devise statistics, if necessary).

Graxagal is brutally hard on the competition. After the bouncers finish scraping his opponent off the floor, the farastu calls out for a more worthy challenger. Combatants may use fists or weapons of any kind in the 18' high combat cage.

The *necklace of Shaktari* worn around Kaliva's neck is detailed later. It does possess some magical properties, but Rule-of-Three's interest in it is purely superficial. In truth, it is Nalen Blackstar, not the cambion, who wants the necklace as a souvenir. If the necklace is recovered and given to Rule-of-Three, the cambion ensures that the "trinket" is safely delivered to the wizard's lair in the Outlands.

THROUGH • THE PORTAL •

By the time the PCs are ready to enter the Abyss, they should have a map of Kaliva's island and a gate-key provided by the dabus, as well as vital information from Rule-of-Three. The rakshasa's portal takes the PCs to the Plain of Infinite Portals, first layer of the Abyss, from where they can reach the deeper layers. The PCs have several NPCs supporting their efforts including Warrin Spellbinder, the tieflings Turia and Salja, the dabus, and Rule-of-Three. Warrin, Turia, and the quasit Zilbog may elect to accompany the PCs on their journey, although the DM may prefer to let the party travel alone.

If the gate-key (snake) is brought within 5' of the portal, the magical gate opens and remains open. If the snake is killed or taken 5' from the gate on either side, the portal snaps shut. At the DM's discretion, one of the dabus is waiting at the portal when the PCs return from the Slaughterhouse to ensure that the PCs cross the threshold safely.

If the PCs decline to walk through the portal, the dabus leave the snake in their custody (with the coffer to contain it) and depart. Individuals who turn down a request by the dabus often find themselves the subjects of scorn and ridicule by other denizens of Sigil; a few, according to Warrin Spellbinder and Rule-of-Three, have even found their way into the Mazes — condemned by the Lady of Pain herself! In short, Warrin suggests that the PCs help him retrieve *Midnight* from the rakshasa's clutches (as well as the dabus' sword, *Ffazablur*). If Turia the tiefling is with the party, she plans to retrieve *Starzad* whether or not the PCs join her, and she uses the gate-key to open the portal if she can.

The Plain of Infinite Portals

If the PCs pass through the portal, read or paraphrase the following:

> You walk through a blinding light into a realm far removed from the hustle and bustle of Sigil's overcrowded streets. The ground beneath your feet is dusty, and you find yourself standing in the shadow of two crumbling spires. Behind the damaged citadel, beyond a great precipice, a brilliant orange fireball burns in the auburn sky. Looking around, the ground seems to fall away everywhere, leaving deep gashes and chasms. The air is hot and dry. With the sun, it gives everything a parched look.

The PCs should not stay in the Plain of Infinite Portals long. DMs who require more information about this layer and its inhabitants should consult the *Planes of Chaos* boxed set. (A map of the Plain is provided on page 11 of *The Travelogue.*)

Weapons and armor fashioned on the Prime Material plane lose two "plusses" when brought into the Abyss. Hence, a *shield +2* behaves as a normal shield, while *plate mail +3* drops to +1. Similarly, a *long sword +1, +3 vs. regenerating creatures* forged on the Prime Material plane would behave as a *long sword +0, +1 vs. regenerating creatures.* Magical armor and weapons crafted in Sigil or the Outlands lose one "plus" when brought to the Abyss. Items rendered inert (i.e. those that lose all their plusses) still radiate magic and can be used against creatures affected only by magical weapons. For details, consult *A DM's Guide to the Planes,* pages 15 and 16 (in the PLANESCAPE boxed set).

LOOKIN' FOR THE GATE TO VUDRA, EH? HANGIN' YERSELF NOT PAINFUL ENOUGH, BERK?"

— THE ARMANITE ARKOM, STANDING WATCH AT THE BRIDGE OF SKULLS

The closest building to the portal is the ruined fortress of Broken Reach. The target of many sieges, this structure's ramshackle appearance is meant to deceive. In fact, it is a well-fortified structure with a considerable garrison of petitioners and addle-coved tanar'ri.

Read the following once all the PCs are through the portal:

> Separating you from the crumbled fortress is a 20'-wide crevice of indeterminate depth. Spanning the fissure is a mortared bridge of humanoid skulls 10' wide. Standing on each side of the bridge is a monstrous, centaur-like beast with the horns of a ram, the body of a bull, and spines along its neck and tail. These formidable sentries wear fluted armor and carry wicked-looking halberds. They stare at you harshly.

These sentries are armanites, a breed of lesser tanar'ri detailed in the *Planes of Chaos* boxed set. Armanites are the mobile shock troops of the Blood War. They can gallop through the air as easily as they tread upon the ground, and their fury in battle is legendary. The armanite on the left is Arkom, while the one on the right is named Mokra. Arkom has instructions to escort visitors anywhere they wish in the Plain; Mokra has orders to kill any berk who speaks to him or tries to cross the fissure without first asking Arkom for permission.

If battle erupts between the armanites and the PCs, Mokra keeps the PCs busy while Arkom flies off to alert the fortress. If Arkom makes it back to Broken Reach, the fortress dispatches V'tanor, a goristro tanar'ri, to annihilate the party. This greater tanar'ri arrives in 9 rounds and hunts the PCs anywhere on the surface of the Plain of Infinite Portals, using its *spider climb* and *levitate* spells to reach victims in difficult places. The PCs would be wise to steer clear of this behemoth.

Arkom and **Mokra** (armanites): INT average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 18, fly 18 (C); HD 5; hp 40 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2 and 1; Dmg 2d6/2d6 and 1d10+5 (halberd); SA crushing hooves; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; immune to cold, poison and electricity; standard tanar'ri immunities; SZ L; XP 2,000; *Planes of Chaos MS*/24.

V'tanor (goristro): INT low; AL CE; AC –2; MV 15; HD 20; hp 188 (see below); THAC0 1; #AT 2 and 1; Dmg 6d4+6/6d4+6 and 5d8; SA spells, stomp, hurl boulders; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; tanar'ri immunities; regenerate 1 hp/turn; MR 60%; SZ H (22' tall); ML 16; XP 23,000; *Planes of Chaos MS*/26. Goristroi add 6 hp to each Hit Die, giving them a Hit Die range of 7–14 instead of 1–8.

Spell-like abilities (cast at 20th level): *detect invisibility, detect magic, fear* (as wand, by gaze), *levitation, spider climb.*

Descent Into Vudra

If the PCs follow Rule-of-Three's advice and approach the armanite on the left of the Bridge of Skulls (Arkom), they are not attacked provided they aren't too pushy. Arkom knows where to find

the entrance to the layer of Vudra, and he escorts the PCs there if they speak the name "Shaktari" and offer him some garnish. The armanite expects at least 150 gp worth of treasure for the courtesy. He also accepts "trophies" taken from slain baatezu (horns, teeth and the like) which are worth just as much as gold on the Plain.

The entrance to Vudra is located several hundred yards from the party's point of arrival, concealed behind a *hallucinatory terrain* spell. When touched by the tip of the armanite's halberd, the illusion is temporarily dispelled (for one turn). The entrance is a narrow, nondescript doorway cut into the side of a rocky ditch. Etched into the stonework above the door are three lines of dwarven runes chiselled by a petitioner from Sigil (in dwarven) that read "The River of Doom/Ten Platinum Coins/Only Fools May Enter." Beyond the gaping doorway is a long, descending tunnel that fills up with mist as the party nears the bottom.

"SNAKES! WHY DOES I+ HAVE +O BE SNAKES?"

— WARRIN SPELLBINDER, PEERING IN+O KRIKON'S GONDOLA

Read the following if and when the PCs reach the bottom:

> After a lengthy descent, the tunnel opens onto a stone platform within a monstrous cavern. A dark mist crawls along the surface of a crimson river. The ceiling overhead is ribbed like the inner passage of some great worm, and bathed in ripples of red light emanating from the river's gloomy depths.
>
> The rythmic echoes of a single oar moving gently through water resonate softly in the cavern. From behind a thick veil of fog comes a large gondola with the skulls of horned fiends mounted on its bow and stern. A hooded boatman guides the vessel to the edge of the platform.

The party is standing on a platform overlooking part of the River Styx. PCs who immerse any part of themselves in the waters of the Styx suffer complete loss of memory, no save. (Magic resistance checks still apply.) For some unknown reason, tieflings are unaffected by the memory-draining power of the River Styx, as are hydroloths, amnizu, and certain other planar fiends.

The gondola magically alters its size to accommodate whoever (or whatever) travels aboard. Regardless of the boat's size, it takes only one ferryman to guide it safely down the Styx. The boatman, Krikon, is a marraenoloth. Krikon attacks only in self-defense and does not speak. He requires only two things from the party: their payment and the name of their destination. Before the PCs can set foot in the gondola, the marraenoloth holds out a bronze urn. The party must drop a minimum of 10 pp or two 50-gp gems in the urn to secure safe passage down the river.

The floor of the gondola is filled with snakes — Krikon's nasty "surprise" to first-time explorers of the River Styx. The snakes, though poisonous, do not attack passengers unless the marraenoloth is threatened. If anyone attacks Krikon, the snakes attempt to bite every living passenger on the boat. In addition to the snakes, Krikon can summon 1d6 hydroloths (75% chance) that appear through a gate in the water under the boat. If Krikon is slain or knocked overboard, the gondola sinks into the river, never to ply the Styx again.

If the PCs try to follow the river in something other than the gondola, they have a base 1% chance of ending up on the correct layer of the Abyss. Only marraenoloths have the skill to navigate the Styx with absolute accuracy.

Krikon (marraenoloth): INT exceptional; AL NE; AC –1; MV 18; HD 10+20; hp 63; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA gaze inspires fear, spell-like abilities; SD immune to fire, acid and poison; cold attacks inflict double damage; MR 80% to 1st-level spells (–5% per additional spell level); SZ M; ML 15; XP 7,000; PLANESCAPE *MS*/30. Krikon's urn holds only what the PCs place inside it (payment for safe passage down the River Styx).

Poisonous snakes (6 per passenger): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (+2 to save; onset time 1d4+1 rounds; Death/0); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/320.

• VUDRA •

Vudra is poisonous to everything except tanar'ri and native creatures like the rakshasa, the yuan-ti, and the eyewings. Poison saturates the entire plane. Although the water and plants are especially dangerous, the air is tolerable to most humanoid beings for up to 12 hours, after which time a saving throw is required each hour or the affected person suffers damage. (Treat as Type I poison with respect to damage and onset time.) Spells such as *slow poison, neutralize poison,* and *heal* (and magical items that duplicate these effects) operate normally. A *neutralize poison* spell, however, does not grant its recipient permanent immunity to Vudra's poisoned air; rather, it gives the recipient 24 hours in which to function normally.

PCs who fail to bring their own food and water must again use magic to make plants and animals edible. *Purify food and drink* spells are vital here.

Vudra consists of hundreds of tropical islands, each populated by unusual species of flora and fauna, many of them dangerous. Druids find themselves at a loss to identify most of the plants, as the vegetation is particular to this layer of the Abyss only. PCs attempting to use their herbalism proficiency suffer a –10 penalty to all proficiency checks when attempting to identify or utilize any species of plant.

Shaktari's Ichor

To counter Vudra's poisonousness, the PCs must rely either on their own magic and ingenuity or a fluid known as Shaktari's Ichor (or q'laari). This brown, viscid liquid (which tastes like maple syrup) radiates strong abjuration magic and springs from the plane itself. However, locating q'laari can be difficult if one does not know where to look.

The inhabitants of the Taboolands (see "Kaliva's Island," area **C**) can direct the party to a known source. They need the ichor to drink Vudra's water and breathe the air safely. Those who drink q'laari gain temporary immunity to all poisonous liquids and gases (as per the *scroll of protection from poison*). The effect lasts for one week, regardless of how much q'laari the recipient takes. Tanar'ri find q'laari revolting.

Shaktari's Ichor can be used to create *neutralize poison* potions. However, the valuable q'laari is not easily found and hardly ever in large amounts!

The Bloodsea

As Krikon's gondola approaches the threshold to Vudra, the river disappears in a thick sea of fog that cannot be blown away or parted by any means.

> A thick fog envelops the gondola. The soft splishing sound of the ferryman's oar is the only noise you hear, although you can feel the gentle rubbing of something moving beneath the gondola's ancient hull. Suddenly, without warning, bolts of red lightning shoot up from the water and form arcs over the vessel. The ferryman, unperturbed, continues to ply the river. Except for a slight electrical hiss, the arcs are quiet, but in moments the fog gives way, the lightning subsides, and the darkness vanishes. The gondola is bobbing on the surface of a vast, crimson sea. The sunless sky is the harsh color of burnt russet, and set against the distant horizon are the foreboding silhouettes of several large islands.

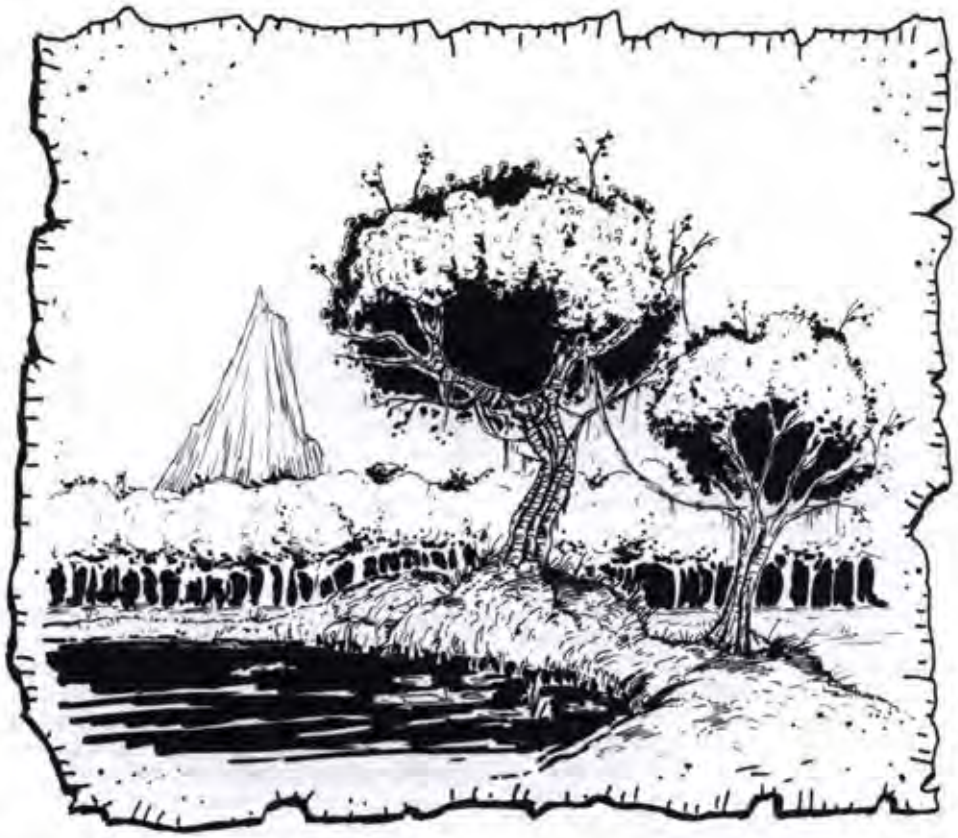
The River Styx flows right into the bloodseas of Vudra, whereupon the waters lose their memory-draining effect but become highly poisonous. Any non-tanar'ri who drinks from the Bloodsea must save vs. poison (treat as Type E poison with a –4 penalty to save.) The marraenoloth does nothing to dissuade PCs from tampering with the water. He continues to guide the boat in the direction the party is headed.

The Eyes of Raja Khan

The following boxed text assumes the PCs haven't lost their map of Vudra (provided by the dabus). It also assumes they arrive in Vudra aboard the marraenoloth's gondola:

> The gondola makes its way toward a body of land with three grim spires — unmistakably the island you seek. The tops of the mountains are obscured by a thick red haze that covers the island like a canopy. Five large, bat-like creatures form a circle in the sky overhead, but they are too high to identify. After several minutes of circling, they fly off in the direction you are headed. You keep a watchful eye for landmarks along the ever-nearing coast.

To reach the black beaches of Kaliva's domain, the gondola passes between the Claws, an ominous ring of rocky spires that jut from the water near the coastline. The five "bat-like" creatures seen flying overhead are eyewings. These monsters routinely scour the seas for signs of intruders or lost wayfarers. When they spot the gondola, they return to the island to warn Raja Khan of the approaching visitors.



If the PCs shoot missiles at the eyewings, 1d4 of them descend to attack the gondola while any remaining eyewings fly to the island to alert the rakshasa. The eyewings first swoop down to attack with their claws and poisonous tail, knocking an opponent out of the gondola (and into the poisonous water) on a natural roll of 20. After one swoop attack, the eyewings ascend to an even height of 100′ and bombard the vessel with their poisonous tears. The eyewings must check morale each round; if they fail, they return to the island.

Eyewings (5): INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV fly 24 (B); HD 3; hp 18, 15, 15, 13, 11; THAC0 17; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d4 or tears; SA poisonous tears; SD immune to cold-based attacks; SZ L (15′ wingspan); ML 12; XP 650; *MM*/115.

Reaching the Coast

> The gondola continues its direct approach to the land ahead, skimming within a balor's breath of the nearest rocky outcropping. Beyond the black sand beach, atop a great plateau, awaits a dark wilderness teeming with foliage. The three mountains stand out against the sky, their bald peaks lost in the reddish shroud of haze that covers the entire island.

The outcroppings along the coast are not dangerous to small ships like Krikon's gondola. The PCs have no trouble reaching the beach. For another 10 pp in his urn (or the equivalent in gems), Krikon remains at the point of arrival for one day, expecting to take the PCs back up the Styx to the Plain of Infinite Portals. However, if the passengers leave without placing treasure in the urn, Krikon and his gondola vanish, never to return. Likewise, if the PCs fail to return at the appointed hour, the marraenoloth does not wait for them.

• KALIVA'S ISLAND •

Kaliva's island has many unusual features. The regional topography includes a black beach (area **A**), a vast and perilous jungle plateau (area **B**), and three rocky mountains (areas **D**, **E**, and **F**). The island's jungle is home to thousands of serpents and other reptiles, as well as insects and predatory plants. There are no birds, and the only native mammals are the bar-lgura (statistics given in area **B** below).

Travel through the jungle is slow and potentially hazardous. Non-native creatures move at half their normal movement rate (rounded up) since they must spend time hacking through the underbrush and navigating around various natural obstacles. Movement in the Taboolands (area **C**) is not hampered if one sticks to the trails.

Climbing checks are required every 100' if the PCs attempt to scale the plateau wall or one of the mountains. Since the mountains are roughly 2,000' tall, PCs wishing to reach the top must make at least 20 successful climbing checks, but only one for the 100'-tall plateau.

Insects are a particular nuisance on the island's plateau, and individuals who are not protected (with magical bug repellent, for example) suffer a rash of itchy and poisonous bites. Each hour, bitten victims suffer –1 penalties to attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws, and the effects are cumulative (up to maximum penalties of –5). A saving throw vs. poison is allowed each hour to resist the debilitating itchiness.

The players' map of Kaliva's island lacks key landmarks found on the DM's map. Because of the red haze over the island, PCs can just barely make out the scowling face carved into Mount Garzok (area **F**). Raja Khan's temple, perched atop Mount Charaga (area **E**), is totally obscured. Likewise, the small cave half way up Mount Drasve (area **D**) cannot be seen through the haze.

A. The Black Sand Beach. The sprawling beaches enclosing Kaliva's island are ominous but not dangerous. If the PCs spend more than 10 rounds in the open, though, they are seen by 1d6+4 eyewings circling the nearest mountain and attacked on the beach. (See "The Eyes of Raja Khan" for eyewing statistics.) The eyewings remain hidden in the clouds until they descend to attack.

Once they make their way from the coastline, the PCs must find some way to reach the top of Kaliva's jungle plateau. The sheer cliffs that surround the plateau are approximately 100' high, and PCs must make a successful climbing check to scale them safely. The cliffs have numerous rocky outcroppings to aid would-be climbers.

B. Jungle Terrors. The jungles of Kaliva's domain are home to several tribes of tree-dwelling bar-lgura. The bar-lgura have been warned to steer clear of the Taboolands (area **C**), but they attack anyone who strays beyond the confines of the Taboolands or violates their territory. The DM should arrange at least one encounter with the bar-lgura if the PCs choose to cross the jungle by land.

If humanoid intruders are spotted, six bar-lgura use their *change self* ability to assume the form of friendly human or humanoid natives, leading the trespassing party to a small village created using *spectral force* spells. The clearing that contains the "village" is surrounded by another six invisible bar-lgura hidden in the outlying trees. These bar-lgura attack once their brothers assume their true forms. If half the bar-lgura are slain by the party, the survivors use their teleport ability to flee.

Bar-lgura (12): INT average; AL CE; AC 0; MV 9, climb 15; HD 6+6; hp 36 each; THAC0 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6/2d6 or by weapon +3; SA spring attack; SD spells, camouflage; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 13; XP 8,000; *PMC*/97 (Tanar'ri, lesser). Spell-like abilities: *change self* (twice/day), *detect invisibility, dispel magic, entangle, fear* (by touch), *invisibility* (twice/day), *plant growth, spectral force* (twice/day), *telekinesis, darkness 15' radius, infravision, teleport without error.*

C. The Taboolands. If the PCs head inward to the center of the island, they reach an area of the jungle inhabited by a community of "natives" called the Alives. These individuals were taken from their homeworlds on the Prime Material plane and brought to Vudra by Raja Khan. The Alives believe that Kaliva drinks their blood and animates their corpses for the rakshasa, who uses them as guards and servants in his temple atop the island. In truth, Kaliva does not drink the blood but rather offers the Alives to her mistress Shaktari.

> Traveling between two of the island's towering peaks, you happen upon a row of primitive warning markers — skulls tied with vines to bamboo shoots. Suddenly, from behind one of the markers, a lone figure emerges from the underbrush. It appears to be a slender human female with painted skin, brandishing a primitive spear. Behind her, barely visible through the underbrush, are two tanned elves armed with longbows. They watch you cautiously through the dark, overhanging foliage.

The human, Lela Melorik, speaks on the behalf of the Alives. The elves, Aryeth and Elaren, are also members of the "tribe." If a PC speaks to them in some version of common, Lela asks the PCs, "Are you enemies or friends of the marilith?" If the PCs reply that they are enemies, she beckons them with a wave of her hand and leads them to a clearing several hundred yards away where 1d10 Alives have quietly gathered. If the PCs say they are friends of the marilith, Lela shouts, "We won't be taken without a fight!" before she and the elves retreat into the jungle. Once they are out of the party's sight, Lela orders the other Alives to disperse and hide before concealing herself.

Most of the Alives remain hidden in the jungle, afraid that the PCs may be one of Raja's elaborate traps designed to snare them. At the rate Kaliva takes victims (an average of one every 5–7 days), their numbers would be quickly depleted if Raja Khan were not so diligent about "restocking" the Taboolands with fresh humanoid blood. When the party arrives, there are 49 Alives in the jungle. They do not dwell in a common village, preferring to take up individual hiding spots throughout the vicinity. (Concealed pits or decrepit tree houses make common lairs.) The Alives eek out a meager existence, feeding on small lizards and snakes caught in traps while surviving Vudra's poisonous atmosphere by taking regular draughts of q'laari from the Pool of Serpents (area **D2**).

The Alives know nothing about the stolen swords. They do know the territory around the island well. They have placed markers along the perimeter of the Taboolands as a warning to intruders and other denizens of Kaliva's island. The markers are comprised of old skulls mounted atop bamboo staves. The rakshasa has warned the Alives to

maintain these markers for their own safety. These markers have been enchanted with magical wards, preventing any creature with an Intelligence of 4 or lower (including most reptiles and insects) from approaching within 100 yards of a skull marker. The Alives, sensing the markers' power, tend to reside within sight of them. The Alives are quite valuable to Kaliva, which is why they are not threatened by the more intelligent creatures living in the jungle (such as the bar-lgura).

The Alives have no way to escape Vudra. They watch helplessly as the "snake men" (yuan-ti) drag screaming victims away to Drazve Mountain (area **D**). Those who are taken to the mountain are never seen again. To give their lives meaning, the Alives have formed a religion based on the teachings of a slain adventurer named Janyx. Janyx was teleported to Vudra by a magical "mishap" and lived with the Alives for nearly a year before he was discovered and slain by the rakshasa. A short-time resident of Sigil and a member of the Society of Sensation, Janyx taught the Alives the Sensate philosophy: that the multiverse is known by the senses. To this day, the Alives still abide by the rule of that philosophy: "If you can't see it, smell it, taste it, touch it, or hear it, then it ain't real." Although Janyx is long gone, the Alives do everything they can to explore their surroundings while endeavoring to stay alive. They cultivate flowers, sample new dishes prepared from assorted poisonous plants (using q'laari to negate the poisons' effects), carve flutes from bamboo, and share poems. Their experiences are captured visually in decorative images painted on each other's bodies.

Since the Alives regard Kaliva as their nemesis, they have no qualms about helping strangers reach her lair (which they believe lies beyond the Pool of Serpents). They show the PCs where the doomed Alives are taken and where they get their q'laari. If by some miracle the party destroys Kaliva and Raja Khan, the Alives rejoice and try to escape with the PC survivors. Should the PCs be defeated, their deaths provide Kaliva with enough blood to postpone the deaths of several terrified Alives. Either way, the Alives benefit from the party's presence.

The Alives are not powerful. The rakshasa has abducted people who are easily intimidated. (Most of these people recall how the rakshasa lured them to Vudra by assuming a pleasing form.) Most of them are humans taken from the jungles of worlds like Toril and Oerth, but there are a handful of demihumans present as well (halflings and elves). The hot, parched skies of Vudra have tanned their skin. They are virtually naked save for loincloths and body paint. They carry spears made from

bamboo (Dmg 1d4), daggers made from sharpened rocks (Dmg 1d3), and short-bows with pointed wooden arrows (Dmg 1d4). The two elves, Aryeth and Elaren, use well-crafted longbows.

Humans (41): INT average–high; AL varies (NG); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1d6+1 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 5; XP 150 (per human rescued). Lela Melorik (hp 4) is the leader and does most of the speaking on the Alives' behalf.

Halflings (6): INT very; AL varies (LG); AC 10; MV 9; HD 1d6 hp; THAC0 20 (17 with shortbow); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA +2 to surprise rolls, +3 to hit with slings and bows; SZ S; ML 5; XP 150 (per halfling rescued); *MM*/183.

Elves (2): INT high; AL varies (CG); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1+1; THAC0 19 (18 with long bow); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA +1 to surprise rolls; SZ M; ML 7; XP 150 (per elf rescued); *MM*/108. The two elves are named Aryeth (hp 6) and Elaren (hp 5).

Janyx's Arrow

When Janyx the adventurer was slain, the Alives hid his remaining equipment at the back of Lela's shelter. If the party agrees to face Kaliva, Lela allows PCs of non-evil alignment to take these possessions: a *short bow of distance* (see *Encyclopedia Magica*, vol. I, page 204) and an *arrow of slaying tanar'ri*. The *short bow*, crafted in Arboria, is normally +2 to hit and +2 on damage, but in the Abyss it loses its magical bonuses. However, the weapon's doubled range (100/200/300) can still be utilized.

Janyx's *arrow* is treated as a +3 weapon for "to hit" purposes, +2 in the Abyss. (Since the weapon was crafted in Sigil, it loses only one "plus" when shot in the Abyss.) The *arrow's* head is forged from Baatorian green steel, while the shaft is carved from vertwood (a strong, fibrous material found in the woods of Arboria). Any tanar'ri struck by the *arrow* is slain instantly (no save). The PCs can use this missile to strike down Kaliva; if the shot misses, however, the *arrow* is wasted.

The Alives do not know the power of Janyx's *arrow* or *bow*.

Master of Deceit

If alerted to the presence of intruders by the eyewings in "Vudra," Raja Khan uses his *mirror of mental prowess* to spy on the party. As the intruders near the Taboolands, the rakshasa makes plans to infiltrate them. Raja wants to determine the extent to which the PCs are a threat and uncover some of their weaknesses.

Raja leaves his temple (Area **E**) via his magical mirror. Using his keen senses and hunting skills, the rakshasa locates one of the hidden Alives (a halfling tallfellow named Arjin) and dispatches him quietly. Raja then discards the body and assumes its appearance, allowing him to assimilate into the rest of the tribe. The likeness is rendered perfectly, thanks to Raja's *ESP* ability. None of the Alives suspect that the rakshasa is lurking among them.

"Arjin" follows the strangers everywhere, staying at the back of the marching order to avoid placing himself in peril. The timid halfling appears relieved by the PCs' arrival and sticks close to them "for protection." Fortunately for his cover, he is not the only one who latches onto the PCs once their intentions become known.

The PCs might not suspect that Raja has infiltrated the Alives, but they might uncover his presence accidentally. Although he is a master of deceit, Raja Khan's noble upbringing does not allow him to endure insults. If the PCs speak of Raja in a derogatory manner, "Arjin" tries to remind them of the rakshasa's "immense power" and the fear he instills in everyone. With each insult beyond the first, Raja has a cumulative 10% chance of reverting to his true form and attacking the insolent strangers.

If Raja learns that the PCs are equipped with blessed crossbow bolts, he wastes no time returning to his temple. A blessed bolt would kill him instantly, and he doesn't want to risk becoming a target for execution. If he can steal the bolts from the PCs, he tries, using his *unseen servant* spell to assist. Likewise, if he learns that the PCs have an *arrow of slaying tanar'ri*, he tries to confiscate it to protect Kaliva.

If his true identity remains hidden, Raja stays with the PCs for as long as possible, going so far as to follow them into the yuan-ti tunnels (area **D**). The rakshasa takes advantage of any opportunity to trap or harm the PCs. If his true identity is exposed, Raja makes good his escape. He quaffs his *potion of flying*, grabs the nearest foe (preferably a relatively weak NPC like Warrin Spellbinder or Lela Melorik) and flies back to his temple after losing any pursuers in the poisonous clouds. Raja's captive is locked in the temple (area **E6**) and remains there until rescued or sacrificed atop Kaliva's altar.

D. Mount Drasve. This peak contains the only known source of q'laari on Kaliva's island. This sweet ichor flows into a pool at the base of the mountain (area **E2**). Beyond this pool are the tunnels of Raja Khan's evil yuan-ti henchmen. Deep within their lair is a magical portal that leads to the rakshasa's temple. For details, see "The Pool of Serpents."

Located 900′ up the mountainside is a secret entrance to the yuan-ti lair (area **E11**). PCs hoping to reach this cave from the jungle floor via non-magical means must make nine successful climbing checks. There are abundant handholds on the mountainside to facilitate safe climbing.

E. Mount Charaga. Hidden in the haze atop this mountain is Raja Khan's temple. The temple is dedicated to Shaktari's evil demigod consort, Dhanazar, and houses both Raja Khan and the remains of the rakshasa's past victims (including the missing tiefling thief, Llisian). PCs must defeat the rakshasa to reach the magical portal leading to Kaliva's lair. For details, refer to "The Temple of the Rakshasha."

F. Mount Garzok. Etched into the side of this mountain is a leering visage within which lies the Shrine of Shaktari and the lair of the dreaded marilith, Kaliva. PCs must defeat Kaliva and win back the magical swords in her possession to complete their quest. See "The Shrine of Shaktari" for details.

THE POOL OF ✦ SERPENTS ✦

If they so request, the PCs are escorted to the Pool of Serpents (area **D2**) by Lela, Aryeth, and Elaren. The halfling Arjin (see "Master of Deceit") accompanies them with or without permission. The party has two good reasons to explore Mount Drasve. The Alives know that the mountain is where Raja's "snake men" take the Alives who are picked as sacrifices to Kaliva, and the Alives are convinced that the passages beyond the Pool of Serpents lead to Kaliva's lair. Second, the Pool of Serpents is the only known source of

q'laari, or Shaktari's Ichor, on the island. The PCs probably need to rely on this substance to survive Vudra's poisonous atmosphere.

D1. Entrance. Carved into the base of the mountain is a rising, three-tiered platform leading to a stone entrance 20' high and 15' wide. The walls around the entrance are decorated with serpentine frescoes, while beyond this entrance you see a pair of narrow tunnels leading to a large chamber filled with the sound of dripping water.

The sound emanates from area **D2.** The entrance to the Pool of Serpents is unguarded.

D2. The Pool of Serpents. This circular chamber has a domed ceiling 30' high. Jutting from the walls 12' above the floor are four great serpents carved from stone, their necks stretched out to the center of the room. A dark brown syrup drips from their stony fangs into a 15' diameter pool. The pool is nearly filled with the sweet-smelling liquid, but there's no way of telling the pool's depth without prodding for the bottom.

The four stone serpents that jut from the walls are actually part of the stonework and cannot be moved. The stone serpents can each withstand 90 hp damage before breaking off. The q'laari that flows from the serpents' mouths comes from a source deep in the mountain, and there is enough in the pool to sustain the PCs and the Alives indefinitely. The serpents' throats, though hollow, are too narrow for humans and demi-humans to crawl into and explore. There's nothing else to be found in them anyway.

A secret door at the back of the chamber leads to areas **D3–D11**. The yuan-ti use this secret door on a regular basis. Elves, half-elves, and dwarves spot the door on a roll of 1–4 (d6), while other PCs notice the door on a roll of 1–3. The elves Aryeth and Elaren know exactly where the secret door is located; if they are present, they reveal its location to the party.

The Alives do not venture into the yuan-ti tunnels. Only Arjin accompanies the PCs beyond this point. If the PCs refuse to let Arjin join them, the halfling lets out a long sigh and waits by the pool for 1d4+2 turns, just in case the party returns. If the PCs fail to return in the allotted time, Raja Khan sheds his halfing disguise and *teleports* back to his temple. There he watches the party's progress through his magical *mirror.*

THE YUAN-TI TUNNELS

The tunnels beyond the Pool of Serpents are 10' high, roughly-hewn, and maze-like. They serve as home to five yuan-ti, three of whom are present when the PCs arrive. (The other yuan-ti — Serinza and Thoebe — are encountered later in Raja Khan's temple.) Droskar, Ezallus and Vargath patrol the tunnels constantly and are not restricted to any particular area. Once intruders are detected, these yuan-ti use their knowledge of the tunnels to mislead and trap the PCs. Their main goal is to kill the intruders before they reach area **D12**. If necessary, the yuan-ti make their final stand there. The DM should use the magical items in their possession to make the yuan-ti as elusive and deadly as possible.

The yuan-ti are actually the shapechanged remnants of a band of adventurers who thought they could defeat the immortal Shaktari. As punishment for their folly, Vudra's fiendish ruler twisted their minds and their bodies, turning these self-righteous humans into evil yuan-ti halfbreeds.

Droskar (yuan-ti halfbreed): INT genius; AL CE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 8; hp 54; THAC0 13; #AT 2 and 1; Dmg 1d8+1/1d8+1 (with *machete +1*) and 1d4 (tail); SA spells, constriction; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 5,000; *MM*/369; *machete +1, ring of chameleon power* (6 charges remaining).

Droskar's spells (each cast at 8th-level and usable once/day): *cause fear, darkness 15' radius, snake charm, sticks to snakes, neutralize poison, suggestion, polymorph other.*

Droskar has a human head and arms, a snake's tail that can constrict for 1d4 hp damage, and scales that provide protection equivalent to AC 0. He uses his magical ring to blend with the nearby stonework and waits for the perfect opportunity to attack.

Ezallus (yuan-ti halfbreed): INT genius; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 8; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (bite) or 1d8 (machete) or 1d4 (whip); SA paralysis; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 5,000; *MM*/369; machete, two *beads of force, whip of paralyzing* (attack roll required; target paralyzed for 2d6 rounds; save vs. paralysis negates effect).

Ezallus has a snake's head that can bite for 1d10 hp damage and a flexible torso that gives him +1 to saves using Dexterity. Ezallus's preferred weapon is the *whip of paralyzing.* His *beads of force* are embedded in the handle of the whip and resemble large black pearls. Ezallus may remove them at any time and use them to harm or ensnare intruders.

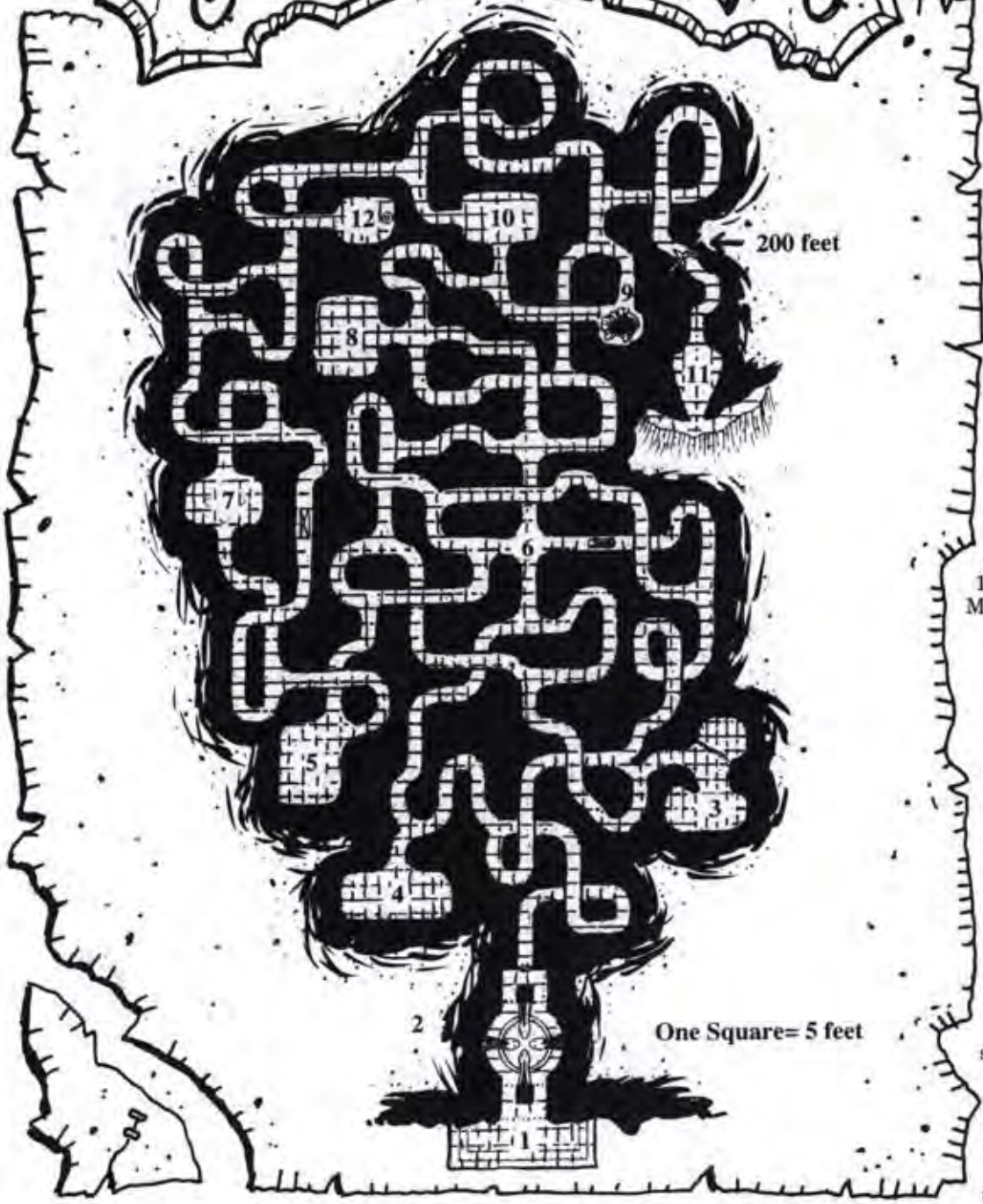
Vargath (yuan-ti halfbreed): INT genius; AL CE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 7; hp 33; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d10 (bite)/1d8 (machete)/1d8 (machete) or special; SA arrows; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 5,000; *MM*/369; two machetes (uses both in the same round without penalty), short bow, *five arrows +1, four arrows of seeking II**, three *arrows of lightning**, six *arrows of biting** (poison inflicts an additional 2d6 hp damage). Items marked with an asterisk are fully described in the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA*, vol. I.

Vargath can discharge three arrows in a single round or attack with his machetes and his bite. This yuan-ti has the head of a serpent and scales instead of skin (AC 0). Vargath's *arrows of seeking II* are ideal for use in the maze, as they can round corners in pursuit of their intended prey.

D3. Yuan-ti Lair. The tunnel opens into a smooth cavern 10' high. The floor in one section of the cave is raised 5' above the rest. Near the cave entrance, one of the yuan-ti (Ezallus) has left behind a layer of skin resembling a tattered drape of silvery cloth.

Droskar and Ezallus have chosen this cave as their lair. Droskar sleeps in the lower portion of the cave, while Ezallus sleeps in the raised section. PCs who enter the cavern and peer around the corner to their right can spot an alcove (Droskar's lair). Hidden under some rocks and debris in Droskar's lair are some items from his days as a fighter: a suit of *chain mail +3* wrapped in a *cloak of survival* (see *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA*, vol. I, page 310). The armor was crafted in the Outlands and behaves as *chain mail +2* in the Abyss. The *cloak*, in addition to granting certain other powers, gives the wearer a +2 bonus to save vs. poison and protects the wearer against Vudra's poisonous air for up to one turn. Ezallus's lair is littered with bones and debris, but he keeps no valuable possessions here.

Yuan-Ti Caves



D4. Yuan-ti Lair. The tunnel opens into a 12′-high chamber serving as the lair of Vargath, Serinza, and Thoebe. Piles of dead plants and debris are "beds" for the three yuan-ti. Vargath's bed conceals nothing of value. Hidden beneath Serinza's bed is a scroll of *protection from poison* in a metal tube. Beneath Thoebe's bed lies a gold pendant (160 gp) bearing the symbol of the Transcendant Order faction (of which Thoebe was formerly a member).

D5. Vacant Cavern. This cave is currently uninhabited, although the yuan-ti could stage an ambush here. The PCs can also use this cave as a place to rest and recuperate.

D6. Pit of Snakes. Two of the tunnels in the yuan-ti lair have concealed pit traps in them. Each pit is covered by a weakened floor that collapses when over 200 lbs. is applied. The pits are 10′ long, 5 ′ wide, and 20′ deep. PCs who fall sustain 2d6 hp damage. Both pits are also infested with 30 poisonous snakes, 2d6 of which are crushed by the falling debris. The surviving serpents attack any living creature that lands in their midst.

Poisonous snakes (30 per pit): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (+1 to save; onset time 1d4+1 rounds; Dmg 25/0); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/320.

D7. Den of Crawlers.

> Four circular chimneys are carved into the ceiling of this eight-foot-high cavern. The floor is littered with bones.

Three chimneys are currently occupied by carrion crawlers. The fourth chimney once contained a carrion crawler, but the yuan-ti were forced to kill it when it strayed into one of their lairs (area **D4**). The carrion crawlers are sensitive to the approach of intruders and scuttle out of their chimneys to attack anyone entering the cave. They are hungry and relentless, pursuing their prey beyond the cavern if necessary.

The chimneys are 20′ high and lined with a mucous-like residue.

Carrion crawlers (3): INT non-; AL N; AC 3 (head), 7 (body); MV 12; HD 3+1; hp 22, 19, 15; THAC0 17; Dmg 1 or 8; Dmg 1d2 or special; SA paralysis; SZ L (9′ long); ML 19; XP 420; *MM*/35.

D8. The Lurker's Trap.

> Hewn into the smooth far wall of this chamber are three rows of shelves, each shelf lined with dozens of humanoid skulls. Embedded into the stonework on either side of the shelves is a human skeleton with glittering gems embedded in the eye sockets.

Clinging to the 15' high ceiling is a lurker. The lurker above is very difficult to spot (10% chance) unless actually prodded. It waits until a living creature is standing near the middle of the cave before descending to envelop its prey (–4 to opponents' surprise rolls). The victim suffocates in 1d4+1 rounds regardless of the amount of damage suffered. The lurker never willingly reliquishes its prey, and anyone caught in its folds can fight using only short weapons that were in hand when the lurker attacked.

The skulls on the shelves were collected and placed here by the yuan-ti. The gems embedded in the skeletons' eye sockets are meant to entice would-be thieves and are worth a paltry 100 gp each (400 gp total).

Lurker: INT non-; AL N; AC 6; MV 1, fly 9 (C); HD 10; hp 51; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA constriction (1d6 hp per round; victim suffocates in 1d4+1 rounds); SZ H (20' diameter); ML 11; XP 2,000; *MM*/229.

D9. Refuse Pit. This 30'-deep pit is where the yuan-ti throw their garbage and, occasionally, their prisoners. Living beneath the heap of filth at the bottom of the pit is a hungry otyugh. The yuan-ti tend to starve this creature, since most of the prisoners taken from the Taboolands are handed over to Kaliva and Raja Khan. However, they do provide the otyugh with an occasional meal — usually something from the nearby jungle. PCs can avoid falling into the pit by skirting along the nearby ledge.

One of Droskar's favorite tactics is to camouflage himself with his *ring of chameleon power,* wait by the ledge, and push unsuspecting victims into the open pit. The otyugh keeps one eyestalk above the refuse, attacking anything yummy that drops into the fissure.

Otyugh: INT low; AL N; AC 3; MV 6; HD 7; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d4+1; SA grab, disease; SD never surprised; SZ L (7' diameter); ML 14; XP 975; *MM*/283.

D10. *Dispel Magic* Chamber. This 25' × 15' cave has a permanent *dispel magic* cast upon it. Any potions that are brought into the chamber must save vs. spell or lose their potency forever. Magical items including weapons and armor are rendered temporarily inert, and magical spells cease to function. If the yuan-ti are looking for a fair fight, they might try luring the PCs into this room so that PC wizards cannot cast spells and PC fighters cannot benefit from magical armor and weapons.

D11. Snake's Head. This cave is carved in the shape of a snake's head and connects with the rest of the complex via a long, descending tunnel. PCs stepping out of the cave find themselves standing on a ledge 900' above the jungle floor. Vision is obscured by a perpetual cloud of toxic red vapor that conceals the upper half of the mountain. PCs who stand on the ledge or remain in the cave for more than a turn must save vs. poison or begin choking for 2d4 hp damage per round. The choking continues until a *neutralize poison* is cast or the victim is force-fed a draught of q'laari from the Pool of Serpents (area **D2**). PCs who protect themselves with q'laari or magic are not affected by the poisonous cloud.

D12. Teleporter Chamber. Positioned against the far wall of this oval cave is an 8' tall stone statue of a coiled, five-headed serpent. The mouths are open, revealing several sets of sharp, stony fangs. Each head has a pair of colored gems for eyes, with each pair a different color

The serpent statue depicts Uxali, Shaktari's five-headed consort. Each of the statue's heads contains a deep, hollow cavity in its mouth. Fastened to the back of each mouth is an iron, T-shaped handle that can be grasped and twisted clockwise. The gems set in the eye sockets are made of cheap crystal (1 gp), but they are useful for telling the five heads apart. The gem colors are blue, purple, green, red, and black. Depending on the color of a head's eyes, turning the handle in its mouth has a given effect:

Blue-eyed snake: This head discharges an electrical jolt that causes 3d6 hp damage to the person clutching the handle (no save).

Purple-eyed snake: The PC turning this handle is instantly *teleported* to the Pool of Serpents (area **D2**).

Green-eyed snake: Turning this handle *teleports* every living creature in the chamber to the entrance of Raja Khan's temple (area **E1**). This is the handle the PCs should turn if they wish to continue their quest.

Red-eyed snake: Turning this handle causes everyone in the chamber to suffer wracking pain, as per the *symbol of pain* spell. Consult the *PHB,* page 193, for the effects.

Black-eyed snake: Turning this handle instantly drains the victim of one level of experience (no save).

TEMPLE OF THE • RAKSHASA •

To reach the temple, PCs must *teleport* to area **E1** using the statue in area **D12,** fly to the top of the mountain via magical means, or climb up the side of the mountain. Raja's temple is hidden from view by the poisonous vapors that enshroud the island. This deadly haze envelops the top half of Mount Charaga, and anyone not protected against the poisonous clouds begins choking after one turn (see area **D11** for full effects).

When not scouring Sigil for magic swords or searching the Prime Material plane for defenseless Alives, the rakshasa presides over this small piece of Kaliva's domain, keeping abreast of things through his *mirror of mental prowess* (located in area **E10**). If Raja is still with the party in his "Arjin" disguise, he waits until the PCs reach area **E10** before revealing himself.

E1. Archway.

> You stand before a stone wall flanked by two great, pointed spires of black stone. Directly in front of you is an archway adorned with leering gargoyle frescoes. Your view beyond the archway is obscured by the thick red haze that surrounds you.

PCs can enter the courtyard (area **E2**) via the archway, or they can climb the 20' wall of mortared stone that surrounds the temple. The walls are connected to four black basalt spires. Each spire rises to a point 50' above the courtyard, and the glassy-smooth surfaces of the spires make them virtually impossible to scale.

PCs who step back from the archway find themselves nearing the edge of a precarious 2,000' drop down the mountainside. PCs peering over the precipice

can barely see the island through the red haze.

E2. Raja's Gallery.

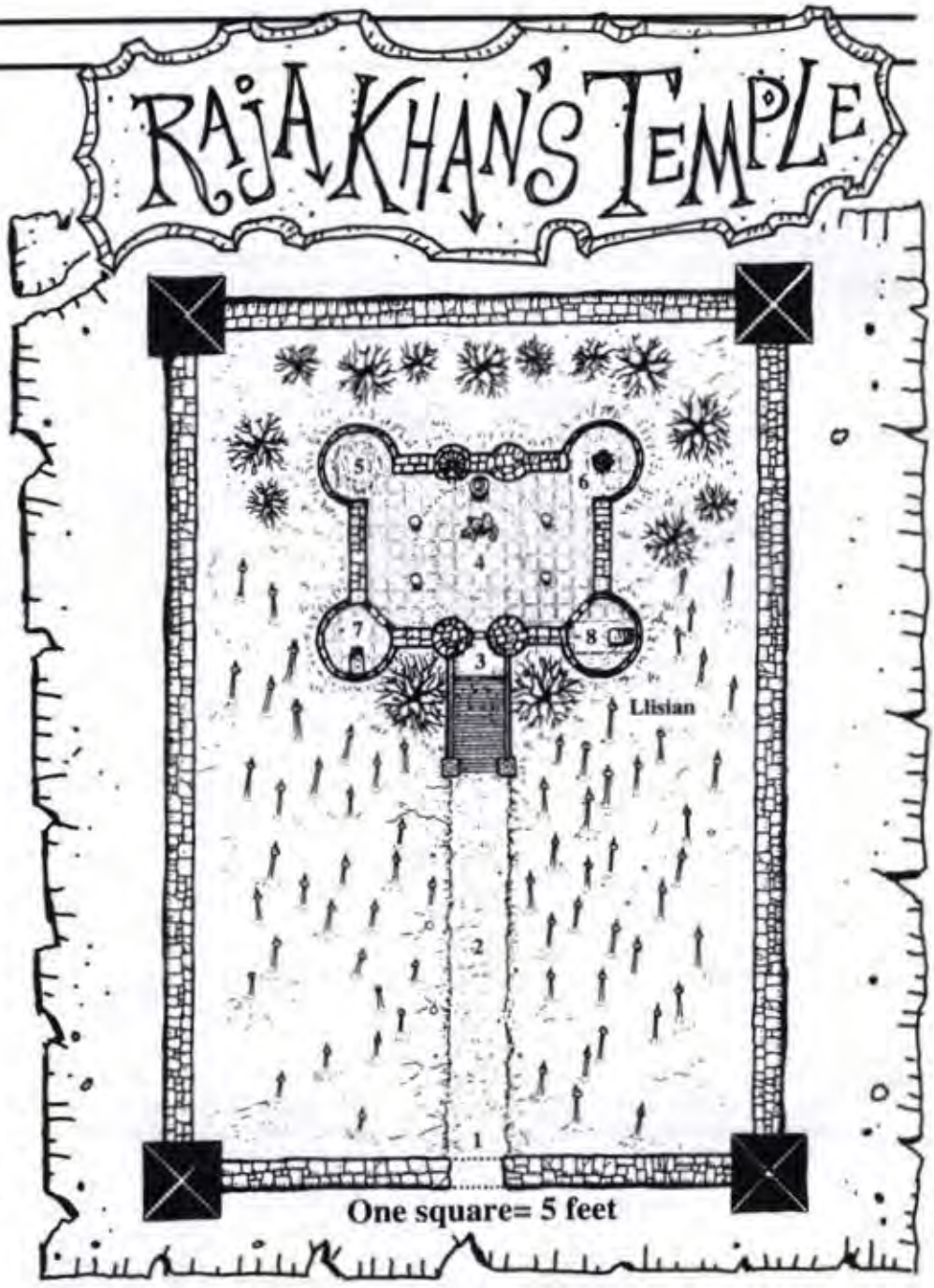
The courtyard is free of the lethal haze that envelops the rest of the mountaintop. This pocket of safe air appears to extend at least 60' into the sky. The effect makes the entire courtyard seem covered by an invisible dome, beyond which the deadly crimson clouds swirl freely.

Standing across from the archway is a monstrous structure of black stone capped by five onion-shaped golden domes. A grey stone staircase leads to the main entrance, and at the base of the staircase are two pedestals with humanoid statues placed atop them. To either side of the staircase, a twisted black tree has sprouted from the rocky earth.

More hideous than the trees or the temple is the courtyard's grisly decor. Dozens of severed heads have been stuck to sharpened poles and placed haphazardly around the courtyard. The displayed heads, taken from humans, demi-humans, and humanoids of all kind, are in various stages of decay.

Among the heads in Raja's "gallery" is that of Llisian Slitterknife, the tiefling who was hired to steal *Starzad* from the Doomguard. If Turia is with the party (see "Rule of Three"), she recognizes Llisian's decapitated head at once. If Llisian's spirit is reached via a *speak with dead* spell, the tiefling (formerly an 8th-level thief) recalls how Raja Khan betrayed and slaughtered him and how much he regrets not saying farewell to his sister, Salja. He knows nothing about the marilith Kaliva, but he is familiar with the upper floor of the temple as well as Raja's "pet" (found in area **E4**).

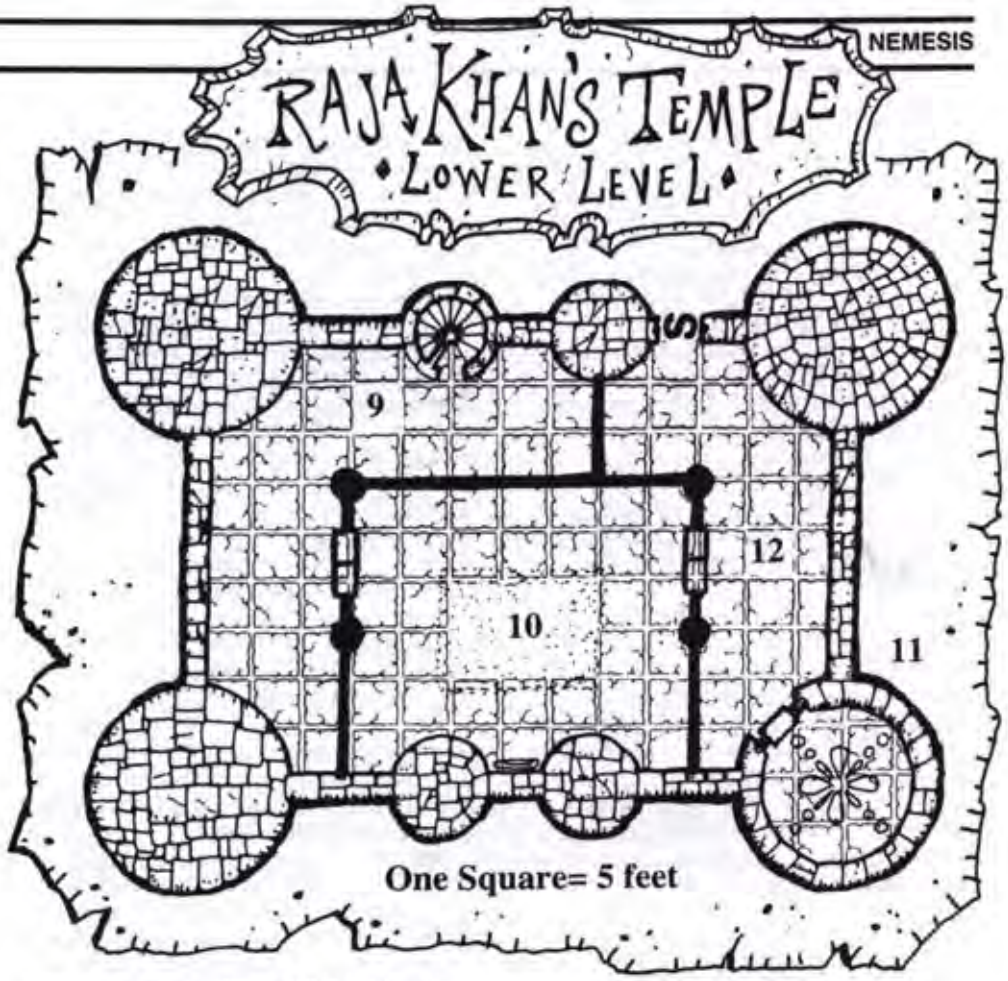
The trees in Raja's courtyard look menacing, but they are harmless. The 7' tall statues to either side of the staircase depict Dhanazar, Shaktari's seneschal. The seneschal ensures the loyalty of the mariliths, exacting vengeance on Shaktari's behalf whenever a marilith fails to honor the Queen of Poison. Dhanazar appears as a horned humanoid with fangs, a whip-like tail, and seven elongated fingers on each hand. Although threatening in appearance, these statues are inanimate. They are actually part of the stonework and cannot be toppled.



E3. The Gold Door. The entrance to Raja's temple is blocked by a door made of solid gold (worth 11,650 gp). The door is unlocked, and the PCs can push it open with ease. Doing so triggers an *alarm* spell in area **E10,** alerting the rakshasa and his yuan-ti concubines to the arrival of visitors.

E4. Guardians of the Temple.

Beyond the golden door is an opulent chamber with gold-veined black stone walls and a black and gold tiled floor. Supporting the vaulted roof are four golden pillars shaped to resemble coiled serpents. The room is illuminated by glowing braziers affixed to the walls. Directly across from the main entrance are two statues: one a twelve-foot-tall horned humanoid with fangs (similar to those at the base of the staircase), and one an incredibly life-like two-headed tiger. The most striking feature of the temple is the brilliant golden dome high overhead. Its interior is adorned with lavish serpentine frescoes revolving around the central image of a marilith.



The 12'-tall statue of Dhanazar is inanimate. Embedded in the statue's eye sockets are two bright rubies (5,000 gp each). Prying them out requires a successful Remove Traps roll. To the left of the statue is a spiral staircase leading down to area **E9.** However, the staircase is hidden behind an illusionary wall (see *PHB*/159). Touching or walking through the wall does not dispel the illusion. Only a *dispel magic* can remove the image of the wall permanently.

The two-headed tiger is Raja Khan's pet, Shakali. Using a wizard's scroll, Raja Khan recently cast a *stoneskin* spell upon the tiger, giving it the appearance of a statue. Shakali is trained to stand perfectly still until intruders enter the chamber. Once they are inside, the two-headed tiger moves to strike.

If Raja is with the party in his "Arjin" disguise, Shakali recognizes its master and leaves the halfling alone. Given the chance, the rakshasa turns himself invisible, slips through the illusionary wall, and heads downstairs to area **E10.** While the PCs are busy fighting Shakali, Raja steps through his magical mirror, borrows the magical scimitar *Starzad* from Kaliva, and returns to area **E10** to prepare for the party's arrival.

Unfortunately for the PCs, Shakali is not the only creature guarding the temple against intrusion. Wrapped around each of the temple's golden pillars is a golden cobra (a mechanical construct similar to the iron cobra). These metallic snakes are 90% undetectable until they strike. The snakes were crafted by Raja Khan himself and inject a strong paralytic venom (Type O, save at –4) with every bite. The cobras can be deactivated by speaking the command word *charaga*. A deactivated and undamaged gold cobra is worth 5,000 gp.

Shakali (two-headed tiger): INT semi; AL NE; AC 6 (*stoneskin* spell absorbs the first 9 attacks); MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 45; THAC0 15; #AT 2 bites/2 claws; Dmg 1d10/1d10/ 1d4+1/1d4+1; SD rake with rear claws for 2d4 hp damage; SD never surprised; SZ L (9' long); ML 11; XP 975; *MM*/36 (Cat, great — modified).

Gold cobras (4): INT non-; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 1; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA poison (Type O, save at –4); SD immune to mind-affecting spells and webs; non-magical weapons inflict only half damage; MR save vs. spells as W12; SZ S (3' long); ML 12; XP 420; *MC*14 (Iron Cobra, variant).

E5. Shakali's Bed. This heap of barlgura furs serves as Shakali's bed. The furs are shaggy and unkempt, and there is no treasure buried within the pile.

E6. Iron Cage. Suspended from the 30'-high domed ceiling is a 4'-diameter iron cage. The wrought iron cage hangs 4' above the floor, and its bars are fitted with spikes to make holding and bending them dangerous. Raja Khan sometimes keeps his prisoners locked away for days before deciding what to do with them. Most captives are beheaded and added to his collection (see area **E2**), while less worthy prisoners become playthings (and food) for Shakali.

If Raja Khan's duplicity was revealed in "Kaliva's Island" (see "Master of Deceit"), he may have successfully captured Warrin Spellbinder or Lela Melorik (or a PC), in which case his captive is trapped inside the cage when the PCs arrive. The cage's lock is impervious to all attacks save *knock* and *disintegrate* spells. The key for the lock can normally be found in area **E10,** unless Raja has removed it for some reason.

E7. Serinza's Bedchamber. This guest room has a domed ceiling 30' high. The only furnishing is an unmade bed used occasionally by Raja's consort, Serinza, who currently resides in area **E10.** The floor of this chamber is covered with 108 golden tiles, each one worth 100 gp.

E8. Thoebe's Bedchamber. This area is identical to area **E7** except that the chamber is used by Thoebe, Raja's other yuan-ti consort. The PCs encounter Thoebe in area **E10.**

E9. The Writhing Floor. PCs who descend the staircase from area **E4** hear faint crackling noises as they near the bottom. The floor of this bent hallway is covered with black tiles and giant centipedes. The centipedes are more of Raja's "pets" and are drawn to sudden movements and heat. They skitter away from open flames and intense cold. PCs

who take slow, deliberate strides through the hall have a 30% chance of reaching the doors to area **E10** without provoking the centipedes; otherwise, the creatures attack *en masse*.

The centipedes do not trouble the rakshasa or his consorts. The incense that burns in area **E10** naturally repels insects, and the centipedes can detect the scent on Raja and his concubines. PCs who spend at least 3 turns in area **E10** benefit from the same protection.

Giant centipedes (120): INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV 15; HD 1/4; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (save at +4; bite causes paralysis for 2d6 hours); SZ T (1' long); ML 6; XP 35; *MM*/42.

E10. Raja's Mirror. The doors leading to this chamber are made of solid gold, and they are unlocked. If Raja Khan is present, he has reverted to his true form and is standing in front of his magic mirror with *Starzad* in his clutches (and the DM should read the italicized part of the text below). If he's still with the party in his "Arjin" disguise, Raja waits until the PCs are inside the room before assuming his true shape. Given the chance, he also casts a *protection from good* spell upon himself.

> Beyond the golden doors lies a chamber filled with the smell of bitter incense. The incense burns in golden braziers which hang from the ceiling by delicate, golden chains. Lying in the middle of the floor is a rug embroidered with various decorative patterns and designs. Affixed to a niche in one wall is a stunning rectangular mirror encased in an elaborately-sculpted silver frame. *Standing in front of the mirror is a large, tiger-headed man clutching a gleaming scimitar.*

Guarding this room are Raja's yuan-ti consorts, Serinza and Thoebe. If they were alerted by their master or the *alarm* spell upstairs (area **E4**), the two halfbreeds use their magical rings to render themselves invisible. If Raja Khan is still with the party in his "Arjin" disguise, he assumes his true form and joins the yuan-ti in battle.

The rakshasa's beautiful, silver-framed *mirror of mental prowess* is affixed to the wall with *sovereign glue*. The only way to remove the *mirror* without destroying it is by dissolving the magical glue with *universal solvent*. The command words for the *mirror* are known only to the rakshasa and his yuan-ti consorts. *ESP* spells cast on Raja Khan or the yuan-ti can be used to learn the proper commands; otherwise, the PCs must rely on *commune, legend lore,* or *identify spells*.

Under normal circumstances, anyone using the *mirror* as a portal can walk back through an invisible "door" and return to this chamber. Unfortunately, Raja learned that while portals *into* Sigil are possible, for some reason he cannot return from Sigil. (The "door" always closes behind him.) Raja believes that Sigil's mysterious Lady of Pain is responsible for this. Nevertheless, once the PCs learn the command words, they can transport themselves back to Sigil with the missing swords.

Hanging on the gilded frame of the mirror is an iron key (to the cage in area **E6**) and Llisian Slitterknife's *amulet of finding*. (See "The Slitterknife Siblings" for details on Llisian's *amulet*.) Raja has not yet added the *amulet* to Kaliva's hoard in area **F9.** PCs see it as they approach the mirror.

The 15' × 10' rug on the floor is actually a *rug of fighting*. With a single command, Raja can order the rug to smother any single man-sized creature standing on it, rendering the victim unconscious in 1d4+2 rounds. A Strength of 19+ is required to unwrap it, although an *animate object* spell works just as well. The carpet may be destroyed by inflicting 25 hp damage on it (AC 10), but the damage is also suffered by the victim trapped in its folds. Consult the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA*, vol I, page 256, for details.

Four gold braziers (1,500 gp each) hang from the chamber's 12'-high ceiling. One of the ingredients in Raja's incense is *oil of bug repellence* (see *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA*, vol. II, page 765). When the incense is lit, insects refuse to enter the room, and anyone who remains in the room for 3 turns carries the potent scent for up to 1 hour after leaving.

Raja Khan (rakshasa rukh): INT high; AL LE; AC –5; MV 18; HD 8+16; hp 69; THAC0 11; #AT 3 or 2; Dmg 1d6+4/1d6+4/2d10 or 1d8+7/1d8+7 with *Starzad* (see "Kaliva's Swords" sidebar); SA illusion, spells (cast at 9th level); SD +2 weapons to hit (weapons below +4 inflict half damage); MR immune to spells lower than 8th-level; SZ M; ML 17; XP 8,000; *MM*/299 (Rakshasa, greater); *Starzad, ring of mind shielding.*

Wizard spells: *charm person, taunt, unseen servant; darkness 15' radius, invisibility, mirror image; haste, vampiric touch.*

Priest spells: *command, protection from good, cause fear.*

Raja defends himself with *Starzad*. If reduced to 35 or fewer hit points, the rakshasa tries to escape to area **F10** via the magical *mirror* or the teleporter in area **E11** (see below). If Raja is struck by a blessed crossbow bolt, he utters the command word to activate the mirror but dies before he can make it to through. The magical gate to Kaliva's lair remains open for one round before closing. PCs can re-open it by saying the command word (*Shallamara*) again.

If the PCs defeat Raja and obtain *Starzad*, Turia (if alive) demands the scimitar. As an emissary of the Doomguard, it is her duty to ensure that the weapon is safely returned to the Armory in Sigil. If the PCs concede to Turia's demands, the tiefling takes the sword, activates Raja's *mirror* (provided she knows the proper command word), and returns to Doomguard headquarters. If the PCs refuse to surrender the scimitar, Turia attacks them. If Zilbog the quasit is present, he attacks the party as well. Unlike Turia, Zilbog flees the instant he is reduced to 6 hp.

Serinza (yuan-ti halfbreed): INT genius; AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 7; hp 41; THAC0 13; #AT 2 and 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (bites) and 1d4 (tail); SA poison, constriction; SA spells; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 5,000; *MM*/369; *ring of invisibility* (8 charges), two invisible *ioun stones* (pale lavender ellipsoid can absorb 32 levels of 1st-4th level spells; dusty rose prism provides +1 protection), two daggers.

Serinza's spells (each cast at 8th-level and usable once/day): *cause fear, darkness 15' radius, snake charm, sticks to snakes, neutralize poison, suggestion, polymorph other.*

Serinza's arms have transformed into poisonous snakes, and victims bitten by these snakes must make a successful saving throw or die in 1d4 rounds. In addition to her legs, Serinza has a snake's tail that can constrict opponents for 1d4 hp/round. She uses her magical ring to attack from behind (negating her opponent's shield and Dexterity modifiers).

Thoebe (yuan-ti halfbreed): INT genius; AL CE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 7; hp 32; THAC0 13; #AT 2 and 1; Dmg by

weapon type (×2) and 1d10 (bite); SA poison; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 5,000; *MM*/369; *ring of invisibility* (10 charges), *rod of terror* (15 charges), invisible *ioun stone* (iridescent spindle sustains her without air), long sword.

Thoebe has a snake's head that can bite for 1d10 hp damage and inject Type O paralytic poison. Although her body is basically human, Thoebe has scales instead of skin (giving her AC 0). Because of her snake's head, Thoebe cannot cast spells. However, she uses her *ring of invisibility* to move around unseen and strike from behind (negating her opponent's shield and Dexterity modifiers).

E11. Teleportation Chamber. Traced in gold upon the floor of this circular chamber is an ornate symbol. The design radiates alteration magic if a *detect magic* spell is cast. Anyone standing in the center of the room (atop the symbol) who utters the command word *Garzok* is instantly *teleported* to area **F10** of Kaliva's lair. Speaking the word "Drasve" *teleports* the PCs back to area **D12.** Garzok and Drasve are the names of the other mountains on Kaliva's island.

E12. Secret Entrance/Exit. This secret door provides another way into Raja Khan's temple. However, the door is especially difficult to detect from the outside. Elves, half-elves, and dwarves have a 1-in-6 chance of finding it, while others have only a 1-in-8 chance of success. From inside the temple, the secret door can be detected normally.

THE SHRINE OF • SHAKTARI •

Kaliva's lair is located deep within Mount Garzok. The teleporter in Raja Khan's temple (area **E11**) can transport the party directly to area **F10,** near the shrine. The PCs can also enter Kaliva's lair via the scowling face carved into the mountainside. (The shrine is located deep beyond the "nose" of Mount Garzok.) The same red haze that surrounded Raja's temple envelops areas **F1–F4.** The haze does not extend beyond area **F5,** however. See area **D11** for the haze's debilitating effects.

F1. The Mouth. The "mouth" of Mount Garzok is a long, relatively shallow cave with a ceiling ranging from 10' to 40' high. The cave slopes down towards the right, giving the mountain its distinguishing scowl.

This cave is home to scores of eyewings that usually cling to the ceiling, their leathery wings wrapped tightly around their bulbous bodies. Raja Khan uses them as spies, and occasionally a group of eyewings leave the lair to hunt. PCs who climb up to this cave or haphazardly fly to within 100' of it are attacked by 5d12 of the hungry critters.

The eyewings are natives of Vudra and thus immune to its natural poisons; they can fly through the clouds of poisonous red haze with impunity.

Eyewings (60+): INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV fly 24 (B); HD 3; THAC0 17; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d4 or tears; SA poisonous tears; SD immune to cold-based attacks; SZ L (15' wingspan); ML 12; XP 650; *MM*/115.

F2. The Left Eye. PCs who climb or fly up to this cave can inspect its contents (located 1,800' above the jungle floor). The back of the cave slopes upward and narrows to a dead end. The twisted side passage is currently occupied by a giant slug. The slug fills the entire tunnel and lunges forward to attack anyone exploring the cave. Tucked at the back of the slug's tunnel are some discarded treasures: a *short-sword +2, +3 vs. tanar'ri* (forged in the Abyss), a *cursed shield –1,* and a suit of *plate mail of etherealness +3* (9 charges remaining; functions as +2 armor in the Abyss).

Giant slug: INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 12; hp 63; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d12; SA spit acid for 4d8 hp damage (usable every other round; save vs. breath weapon for half damage); SD immune to blunt weapons; SZ H (39' long); ML 12; XP 5,000; *MM*/319. The slug is not affected by the red haze that engulfs the mountaintop.

F3. The Right Eye. This cave, located approximately 1,800' feet above the island plateau, has become the lair of two vrock tanar'ri. The vrock are Kaliva's emissaries in the Blood War. They recently arrived and are waiting for instructions from the marilith. In their impatience, they attacked and killed an eyewing and are still gnawing on its cartilege.

The vrock take cruel delight in tearing things apart and attack intruders without much provocation. They use their *telekinesis* ability to hurl PCs off the mountain, and they like casting their *dispel magic* on opponents with *fly* spells. If pressed, the vrock use their *gate* ability to summon a small horde of bar-lgura from the jungle below.

The vrock are not affected by the poisonous red haze that obscures the top half of Kaliva's mountain.

Shaloch and **Eyghor** (vrock): INT high; AL CE; AC –5; MV 12, fly 18 (C); HD 8; hp 51, 45; THAC0 13; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8/1d8/1d6 or by weapon +7; SA spores, screech, first attack; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; never surprised; tanar'ri immunities; MR 70%; SZ L (8' tall); ML 18; XP 19,000; *PMC*/110 (Tanar'ri, true); spell-like abilities (cast at 10th-level): *darkness 15' radius, detect invisibility, detect magic, dispel magic, infravision, mass charm, mirror image, telekinesis, teleport without error,* and *gate* (1d6 bar-lgura; 50% chance of success).

F4. The Nose. The entrance to Kaliva's lair is located 1,750' above the jungle plateau. At the back of this cave is a long, winding tunnel that leads to areas **F5–F11.**

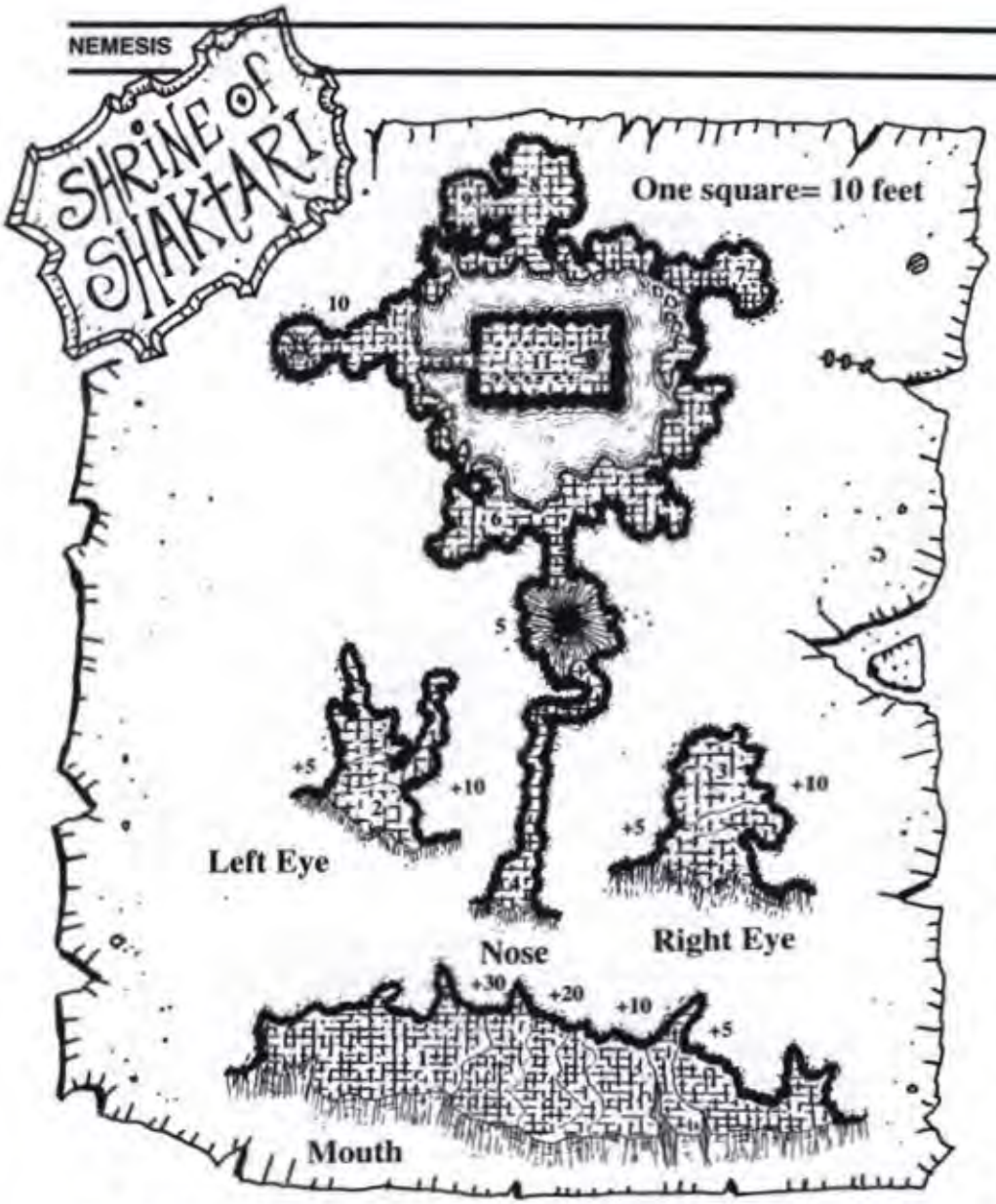
F5. The Sucking Pit.

> The tunnel ends abruptly at a great chasm. There is a slight precipice, then a sudden drop into oblivion. The bottom of the chasm is too far below to see, and there are no distant echoes to gauge its depth; however, you can feel the air being sucked downwards into the pit. The posionous red haze that filters in from outside is also drawn into the chasm.

This pit is a gateway to the quasi-elemental Plane of Vacuum. For details on this plane of nothingness, refer to *A DM's Guide to the Planes*, page 37. There is no air or warmth to sustain humanoid life in the Plane of Vacuum, but certain spells and magical devices can be used (such as Thoebe's ioun stone, from area **E10**).

PCs who plunge into the chasm fall nearly 400' before being cast into the Plane of Vacuum. Crossing the pit can be achieved using *fly* spells, or PCs can attempt to climb along the walls.

Scaling the walls is difficult even with abundant handholds; all climbing checks are made at –20%, and three rolls are required to reach the other side of the pit safely.



F6. The Black Pool.

A terrible stench fills this vast, unlit cavern. Stalactites cling to the ceiling, while circling around the perimeter of the cavern is a broken ledge. The cavern floor gives way to a stinking pit filled with black goop. The tarry slime laps against the sides of the ledge, and occasionally a bubble rises from its abysmal depths. Your attention is immediately drawn to a frightening structure perched atop a plinth of rock overlooking the black pool. The edifice is composed of stalagmites held together with hardened mortar. A narrow causeway joins the ominous structure to the surrounding ledge.

The spired edifice (area **F11**) is the Shrine of Shaktari. However, guarding the shrine are several terrible monsters. The greatest monster is the pool of sentient black slime that surrounds the shrine. The pool is more than 100′ deep, and any creature that falls into it is immediately swallowed and dragged down to its gloomy depths. (The DM may wish to consult the rules for drowning in the event this happens to one of the PCs.) Escaping the pool's clutches requires a successful Open Doors roll made during the initial round, modified by –2 if the PC is moderately encumbered or –5 if the PC is heavily encumbered. Similarly, a roped character can be pulled free with a successful Open Doors roll.

The black pool has the ability to attack PCs on the nearby ledges using its pseudopods. The pool can form only one pseudopod at a time, and only for three rounds. The pseudopod loses cohesion quickly, but another can be formed after 1 turn (10 rounds). The pseudopods inflict no damage, but anyone struck by one (THAC0 15) must save vs. rods or be pulled into the black pool. Armor provides no protection against the pseudopod's attack, and all targets are treated as AC 10 (modified by Dexterity, shields, and magical protection). For example, a character wearing *chain mail +3* (–3 modifier) with a Dexterity of 16 (–2 modifier) and a *ring of protection +1* (–1 modifier) is treated as AC 4. Each pseudopod has 30 hp and is treated as AC 7 for attack purposes. The slime is impervious to fire, electricity, and acid-based attacks, although cold affects it normally.

Clinging to the 70′ high ceiling of this cave, ready to attack any intruders, are three sinister varrangoin — bat-like monsters with forked tails, rotted leather wings, and skull-like heads lit by small, embrous eyes. If there are fewer than three targets to attack, only one or two varrangoins descend , while the remaining varrangoin wait for other intruders to appear. The varrangoin stay away from the pool.

The varrangoin are all of different types. Zurprit is a Type II varrangoin and can breath a cloud of fire 10 yards in diameter (30-yard range). It is immune to fire-based spells and suffers half damage from acid-based attacks. Azdra is Type III and can spit a lightning bolt 5′ wide and 60′ long. This varrangoin is completely immune to electrical attacks. Tibaz is Type IV and spits a glob of acid with a 5′ radius and 30-yard range. It is impervious to acid-based attacks and suffers only half damage from fire. All three varrangoin can use their breath weapons thrice/day for 5d6 hp damage per hit (save vs. dragon breath for half damage).

The shrieks of the varrangoin are loud enough to alert Kaliva, where she waits in area **F11.**

Zurprit, Azdra, and **Tibaz** (varrangoin): INT very; AL CE; AC 0; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 5+5; hp 33, 31, 25; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6; SA breath weapon; SD silver or magic weapons to hit; MR 25%; SZ M; ML 18; XP 2,000; PLANES OF CHAOS *MS*/28. Varrangoins suffer damage from intense light; spells such as *light* and *continual light* cause 2 hp damage per level of the spellcaster.

A sunburst from a *wand of illumination* inflicts 6d6 hp damage.

F7. Wizard's Skeleton. PCs can use this cave as a place to hide or rest. Wedged in a niche at the back of the cave are the skeletal remains of a human. The skeleton is dressed in a tattered robe and clutches the remnants of a spellbook and an intact *wand of lightning bolts* with 3 charges remaining. Most of the spellbook has been ruined, but the spells *gust of wind, wall of fire,* and *cone of cold* are still legible.

F8. Fungi Cave. The walls of this cave are covered with patches of harmless, phosphorescent green moss. The cave contains several oversized varieties of fungi, most of which are poisonous. (The DM may determine poison type using Table 51 in the *DMG.*) None of the fungi are hostile, although some of them have dangerous-looking protrusions, warts, and tendrils.

F9. Hidden Treasure. A vast trove lies strewn upon the floor of this chamber. The treasure consists of items taken from slain trespassers, as well as tributes paid to Kaliva by tanar'ri of lesser status. The trove includes the following: 950 pp, 8,570 gp, 69 assorted gemstones (21 × 50 gp, 15 × 100 gp, 13 × 250 gp, 6 × 500 gp, 3 × 1,000 gp and 1 × 5,000 gp), two silver braziers (500 gp each), a gem-studded long sword scabbard (6,500 gp), a *shield +4* (made in the Abyss, shaped like a nabassu's head), a *horn of blasting* (made from a cornugon's horn), an *amulet of the Abyss* (see *Encyclopedia Magica,* vol. I, page 27) and a *cursed helm of teleportation.* No matter how well the *helm's* wearer knows his intended destination, the location is always treated as "never seen" for purposes of determining teleporter error (see *teleport* spell). Also littering the floor are dozens of humanoid skulls — the remains of careless berks slain by Kaliva and the rakshasa over the years.

F10. Teleport Chamber. The floor of this chamber is engraved with the same intricate pattern that appears in area **E11.** By standing on the symbol and uttering the proper command word ("Charaga"), one can *teleport* directly to area **E11.** Charaga is the name of the mountain atop which Raja's temple is perched. By uttering the word "Drasve," PCs can *teleport* themselves back to Mount Drasve (area **D12**).

F11. The Shrine of Shaktari. This is where the final encounter with Kaliva takes place. The marilith cannot be surprised no matter what precautions the PCs take to conceal their intrusion.

Powerful magic prevents anyone from entering the shrine via magical means. Spells such as *teleport, dimension door, phase door,* and *passwall* do not work. However, the wards do not protect against ethereal creatures or PCs who can move through the astral or ethereal planes. Spells that alter the shrine's material structure (such as *transmute rock to mud* and *disintegrate)* function normally. The shrine is shielded against all forms of magical scrying, including *crystal balls* and Raja Khan's *mirror of mental prowess.*

The double doors leading to the shrine are made of black basalt and are not locked. Unless they are held open, they close behind the party automatically. There are no handles on the inside, but there is a hidden lever on the nearby wall that re-opens them when pulled (treat as a secret door for detection purposes).

When the PCs enter the shrine, read the first paragraph below. If they advance toward the statue or remain in the shrine for 3 rounds, read the second:

> Beyond the archway lies a tremendous vaulted chamber lit by torches. At the back of the chamber stands a fearsome, six-armed statue of a woman with the torso of a coiled snake. The statue stares across the chamber with cold, serpent-like eyes and holds its threatening poise. In front of the statue is a long, blood-stained slab.

> From behind the statue emerges a sinister figure, her features cloaked in darkness. Firelight catches the menacing flicker of a sword and the sinuous coil of a monstrous serpent. From the shadows, the six-armed marilith slithers forward clutching an array of gleaming blades.

The marilith that the PCs see is not the real Kaliva, but a *projected image.* The real Kaliva hides behind the statue of Shaktari, waiting to see how the PCs respond. Attacks directed at the *projected image* pass through it harmlessly. If the PCs are fooled into wasting their attacks and spells on the illusion, Kaliva waits until they're done before dispelling the illusion and slithering into view.

If the PC petition Kaliva for the return of the magical swords, or if they make an inquiry regarding her use for the blades, she replies:

> "My old nemesis, Nalen Blackstar, will soon meet his fate. The Blood War has distracted me these past few decades, but I intend to pay him back for his meager demonstration of power. I will soon be free to leave this island, and with these swords I'll slice through Nalen's defenses and hack him to pieces! My vengeance will be boundless, my wrath immeasurable. Nothing — not even your puny efforts — will prevent me from ending Blackstar's worthless existence."

If Kaliva gave Raja Khan *Starzad,* she supplements her remaining blades (*Ffazablur, Wizardbane,* and *Midnight*) with a *machete +2* (Dmg 1d8+2). If Raja Khan was defeated and *Starzad* recovered, the party can use the *vorpal scimitar* to defeat Kaliva. (See the "Kaliva's Swords" sidebar for a detailed description of each blade.) The PCs may also have Janyx's *arrow of slaying tanar'ri* (see "Kaliva's Island").

Kaliva begins by casting her *cloudkill* spell inside the shrine. Her immunity to poison protects her from the spell. The marilith then fights with her swords, refusing to leave the shrine so long as intruders are present. Fearless to the end, Kaliva does not know the meaning of the words retreat or surrender. PCs can take away some of Kaliva's "firepower" using calculated disarm maneuvers. Only the *Ffazablur* refuses to leave her hand. (See "Kaliva's Swords" for details.) So long as *Wizardbane* remains in her clutches, Kaliva benefits from 90% magic resistance.

Kaliva (marilith): INT genius; AL CE; AC –9; MV 15; HD 12; hp 82; THAC0 9 (base); #AT 5; Dmg 4d6 (tail) and four weapons; SA magical weapons, constriction, spell-like abilities; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; never surprised; tanar'ri immunities; immune to illusions and mind-affecting magic; MR 70% (90% with *Wizardbane*); SZ L (7' tall); ML 18; XP 27,000; *PMC*/104 (Tanar'ri, true); *necklace of Shaktari* (detailed below), magical swords.

Kaliva's spell-like abilities (cast at 17th-level): *animate dead, cause serious wounds, cloudkill, comprehend lan-*

guages, curse, darkness 15' radius, detect evil, detect magic, detect invisibility, infravision, polymorph self (7 times/day), *project image, pyrotechnics, telekinesis, teleport without error* (cannot be used inside the shrine).

Kaliva's platinum *necklace of Shaktari* increases the spell-casting ability of its wearer. Although the number of spells cast by the wearer does not change, the wearer functions as a wizard of five levels higher. Kaliva, whose spell-like abilities are cast at 12th level, now casts spells as a 17th-level wizard. Nalen Blackstar, Kaliva's nemesis, wants the necklace for this reason, which is why he sent Rule-of-Three to contact the PCs. (See "Rule-of-Three.") Intact, it is worth 25,000 gp.

Attached to the front of the slab is a pair of steel manacles. When a living creature is placed in the manacles and a special incantation is recited, Shaktari animates the statue and proceeds to tear the hapless victim to shreds. The victim's life force is devoured, and the statue reverts to its inanimate state. No amount of magic (not even a *wish* spell) can revive a person slain this way.

The statue also animates if deliberately defiled. (This doesn't include accidental damage caused by stray missiles or random magical effects.) The statue is not fixed to its platform and can pursue defilers anywhere in Vudra. The statue can also fly, dig through soft earth, and scale sheer surfaces.

Statue of Shaktari: INT non-; AL CE; AC –1; MV 18, fly 18 (D), climb 12, burrow 9; HD 21; hp 168; THAC0 -3; #AT 6 arms; Dmg 3d6 (×6); SA breath weapon (60' × 60' poison cloud once/turn; save or die after 1d4 rounds of helplessness); SD magical weapons needed to hit; edged/piercing weapons inflict half damage; immune to fire, cold, electricity, poison, and paralysis; MR 100%; SZ H (12' tall); ML 20; XP 48,000; New monster.

• AFTERMATH •

Protective wards cast upon the shrine prevent Kaliva from using her *teleport* spell or *Wizardbane*'s *plane shift* ability to escape. If Kaliva is slain, her body melts away into a pool of venomous ichor (treat as Type N contact poison, save at –4). Lying in the ichor are her enchanted necklace and the stolen swords.

Three rounds after Kaliva is slain, the entire shrine begins to shudder. PCs who depart immediately can make it off the bridge before the shrine collapses into the black pool (area **F6**). Those who remain inside the shrine are crushed beneath tons of falling rock. The bridge that leads back to the ledge collapses as well. PCs waylayed by the varrangoin must get off the bridge or risk falling into the pool!

Leaving Vudra

If the PCs were successful in their quest, they may have several means by which to leave Vudra. The *helm of teleportation* in area **F9** is useful. *Wizardbane*, the magical long sword, can *plane shift* its wielder back to Sigil, while the rakshasa's *mirror of mental prowess* can transport the entire party. If the *mirror* was destroyed, the PCs must rely on their own magic or Krikon the marraenoloth for safe travel back to Sigil. (Krikon returns the PCs to the Plain of Infinite Portals, and from there the PCs must petition the armanite guards for access to a portal leading to Plague-Mort, an Outland burg.)

Conscientious PCs will probably want to gather the remaining Alives (see "Kaliva's Island") before departing. If taken back to the Cage, these clueless sods waste no time learning Sigil's ways. Having already been exposed to the philosophy of the Society of Sensation, the Alives are taken in by the Society and trained as sensates. They spread word of the party's deeds throughout the Cage, no doubt providing the PCs with many new allies (and enemies).

Things in Threes

It's not long before Rule-of-Three learns that the PCs have returned. He sends his three minotaur henchmen to escort them back to the Slaughterhouse. The minotaurs are not too bright, but they are relentless pursuers with an uncanny ability to navigate Sigil's twisted alleys. To them, the Cage is no more complex than the labyrinths "back home."

Rule-of-Three wants Kaliva's necklace and verifies its authenticity with a cursory *detect magic* spell. If the PCs failed to return with the necklace, the cambion petitions one of them to fight Graxagal the gehreleth to the death.

Kaliva's Swords

These stolen swords are part of Kaliva's plan to eliminate her old nemesis, Nalen Blackstar. Each sword is a unique item. To prevent conflicts of personality, only non-intelligent swords were chosen.

Starzad

Starzad is a *vorpal scimitar +5* (*+3* in the Abyss). The weapon was forged by a genie in Qudra (a Zakharan city) and borne to Sigil by a sha'ir who enjoyed touring the elemental planes. The sha'ir, Tejan ibn-Dhabar, transformed himself into a water elemental and became a vassal on the Elemental Plane of Water, but before this happened he sent the scimitar back to Sigil where it fell into the hands of a former colleague. That colleague later became a member of the Doomguard. The blade remained with the Doomguard until it was stolen by the tiefling, Llisian Slitterknife.

Against man-sized opponents or smaller, *Starzad* beheads its victim on a modified roll of 20–23. Against larger-than-man-sized opponents, a modified roll of 21–23 indicates decapitation. Other information on *vorpal swords* can be found in the *DMG*, or the DM can use the critical hit rules in the *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Combat & Tactics* rulebook.

Ffazablur

This *bastard sword of quickness +2* was created by tanar'ri for tanar'ri. It is similar to the *shortsword of quickness* described in the *DMG*. The weapon's hilt resembles a tanar'ri's claw. This claw actually grabs hold of the wielder, ensuring that the weapon is never lost in battle. (Attempts to disarm the wielder automatically fail.) If a baatezu dares clutch the weapon, the claw digs into its flesh, inflicting 3 hp/round until the baatezu dies or until a *remove curse* or *dispel magic* is cast on the blade.

Ffazablur always strikes first in any combat round. If the weapon is employed in the Abyss, the blade strikes twice each round before any other attacks are possible. A few years ago, *Ffazablur* fell into the custody of the dabus. (See "The Dabus.")

Midnight

Midnight is a *broad sword of life stealing +3*. The blade is composed of a strong black metal and infused with energy from the Negative Material Plane. (In the Abyss, it functions as a *sword +1*.) The weapon was found by an adventuring githzerai and sold to a member of the Fated. The weapon was brought to the Hall of Records in Sigil and placed in a vault, where it was later stolen by the rakshasa Raja Khan.

On a natural roll of 20 (or a critical hit, if the DM is using the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Combat & Tactics* rules), *Midnight* drains one experience level or hit die from its victim and imbues its wielder with the drained hit points (never exceeding the wielder's maximum allowable hit points). In addition to its primary function, the sword can *detect undead* within a 30' radius. *Midnight's* wielder is also protected from the energy-draining attacks of undead as well as negative energy spells such as the 4th-level wizard's spell *enervation*.

Wizardbane

Composed of a silvery metallic substance as strong as steel, *Wizardbane* is a *long sword +4* (*+3* in the Abyss) that glows when any of its spell-like abilities are employed. Embedded into the hilt of the weapon is a black pearl containing the life force of a mind flayer. Although the sword in non-aligned, it radiates evil when a *detect evil* is cast because of the pearl. The wielder gains the benefits of the illithid's 90% magic resistance as well as the following spells (each once/day, at 7th level of ability): *suggestion, charm person, charm monster, ESP, levitate, astral projection,* and *plane shift*. All saving throws against these spells are made at –4. If the black pearl is crushed or destroyed by a *shatter* spell (+5 bonus to save), the illithid's life force is destroyed and the sword loses its evil alignment and all of its special abilities, becoming a *long sword +4*.

Wizardbane was crafted by a drow exile who lived in the Outland burg of Plague-Mort. The elf, an evil fighter/wizard, needed an item that would protect him from a secret cabal of good-aligned wizards who were out to get him. He eventually fell prey to one of these wizards, who took the sword and placed it in his tower in Sigil.

Refer to "Rule of Three" for details on this contest. If the PCs commit themselves to the agreement, the cambion troubles them no further. PCs who peel Rule-of-Three had better be prepared to pay the music!

The Doomguard expect *Starzad* to be returned to the Armory. If the faction learns that the vorpal scimitar has returned to Sigil, all of its members will be watching for it. Likewise, the Fated have discovered the theft of *Midnight* from the Hall of Records and have sent petitioners into the Hive searching for signs of it.

When the factol learns about Warrin's involvement, Warrin is arrested on charges of theft unless coercion can be proved. The dabus keep their eyes open for the PCs, hoping to recover the bastard sword *Ffazablur* before certain tanar'ri get their hands on it!

Cut to the Quick

At some future date, with the sojourn to Vudra far behind them, the PCs are visited by the wizard Nalen Blackstar. Nalen appears as a fat, middle-aged man in the prime of life, thanks in part to good living and *potions of longevity*. His thick mane of dark hair is only a wig meant to bolster his self-image, and his robes sport gaudy symbols sewn together with fine silver thread.

Nalen wants the PCs to hand over *Wizardbane*, since it belongs to an acquaintance of his who wants it back. He also wants the PCs to know the truth about Kaliva, as revealed in the "For the Dungeon Master" section. Given the chance, he thanks them for defeating the marilith and retrieving the *necklace of Shaktari*.

PCs may attack Nalen (an 18th-level neutral wizard), but doing so triggers a *contingency* spell that teleports the wizard to safety and guarantees a lifetime of misery for the PCs. To compensate the PCs for the loss of *Wizardbane*, Nalen gives them a *cubic gate*. If the PCs get greedy, Nalen snatches *Wizardbane* (using a *vanish* spell contained in a *ring of spell storing*, or by some other devious means) and leaves them with nothing. The DM may devise statistics for Nalen if necessary. Nalen has several allies and henchmen in Sigil who are more than happy to dispose of troublesome berks. If the DM uses "Nemesis" as the sequel to "Umbra," Durkayle of the Harmonium is just one more of Nalen's "close" acquaintances.

Warrin's Reward

For each sword the PCs retrieve, the party should receive 10,000 XP. This

award should be halved for each blade that is not returned to its previous owner(s). In addition to the awards for experience, Warrin (assuming he survives) offers the PCs a magical scroll, as promised. The scroll is hidden in the Hall of Records and is contained in a sealed metal scroll tube. It is actually a magically-binding pact between Warrin's mother, Eurayle, and an agathinon named Ydgar. Although he can change form to suit his whims, Ydgar typically looks like an elf with opalescent skin and shining eyes. In his humanoid form, Ydgar possesses the spell ability of a 7th-level cleric and wields a footman's *mace* +2. He appears the instant the scroll is unfurled and can be asked to perform one helpful service, including any of the following, provided the summoner is not evil:

- Defend the PCs from an attack.
- Lend the summoner his magical *ring of persuasion* for one month. (This item combines the powers of a *ring of human influence* with a *ring of animal friendship* and uses no charges.)
- Provide magical healing for the entire party (as per a 7th-level priest).
- Assume the form of an inanimate object, to be worn or carried by its summoner. This item (a pendant, lantern or staff) imparts all of the following abilities: immunity to non-magical weapons; improved saving throws (save as 14th-level priest); 20% magic resistance; the ability to cast 1st-level priest spells from any sphere (at will); the ability to turn undead (as a 7th-level priest); immunity to life-draining attacks, *disintegration*, death spells, and positive energy. Ydgar remains with the summoner in this fashion for up to one month.

If the person who summons him is evil, Ydgar attacks at once. If reduced to 20 hp, Ydgar becomes ethereal and returns to his home in the Upper Planes.

Ydgar (agathinon): INT exceptional; AL NG; AC 0; MV 15; HD 8; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or special; SA *shapechange*, priest spells (cast at 7th-level), spell-like abilities; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; save as P14; special immunities; MR 20%; SZ M (varies); ML 14; XP 8,000; *PMC/5; footman's mace +4, ring of persuasion.* Ω

Thanks to this issue's playtesters:

Mike McIntyre
Norajane McIntyre
Steve Fink
Dan Eckelt
Glen McIntyre
Adam McIntyre
Dennis J. DeBalso
David Rubenstein
Roger Chaput
Roy Chaput
Chris Lavery
Shawn Lemaster
Stacy Lemaster
Mike Bowen
Seth Ferguson
Seth Brown
Greg Flagg
Jacob Berry
Doug Donajue
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Colin Girgenti
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Evan Davidson
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Dustin Gebhardt
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Karl A. Rodriquez
Chivarin Khus
Jesse Orozco
Steve Basore
Alan Lynch
John Adams
Mike Basore
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It may take us a bit to respond as we process our next batch of modules, but you'll get an early version of the adventure and rough maps, and an evaluation sheet. You need to return these to us with your comments.

Side Treks

BY JOHNATHAN M. RICHARDS
ILLUSTRATION BY R.K. POST

"Centaur of Attention" is an AD&D® SideTrek adventure designed for three PCs of 2nd and 3rd level or a single 9th-level PC (9 total levels). A druid or an elven PC might be especially apt, but neither is necessary for the successful completion of the adventure.

This encounter takes place in a small village near the forest, on a major route to a larger city. It employs rules taken from *The Complete Book of Humanoids* and *The Complete Druid's Handbook*, but neither book is necessary to run the encounter.

For the PCs

After spending several days passing through the forest, you see a village up ahead, where you might find the pleasures of a hot meal, a tankard of ale, a warm bath, and a clean bed. The village appears small, but it seems big enough to suit your modest needs.

As you approach, there appears to be a commotion in the street, just outside the village tavern. A crowd has formed around a horse-drawn wagon. The people are shouting and shaking their fists at the driver, who you cannot see at first. Drawing alongside the wagon, you see what has caused the crowd's anger: the wagon isn't horse-drawn after all; rather, hitched to it is a haggard-looking centaur.

The wagon's driver is a black-bearded man wearing dark robes. He holds a riding whip in one hand and calls for the villagers to withdraw and let him pass. Leading the crowd in its verbal assault is a young elf, wearing a short sword at his belt. As for the centaur, he seems dazed and bewildered by the entire ordeal.

For the Dungeon Master

The wagon's driver is a wizard named Khielgarn. After purchasing a tome detailing the procedures involved in improving the odds of acquiring a quasit to respond to a *find familiar* spell (Khielgarn had not cast the spell yet, for fear of summoning a toad or other weak familiar), he was anxious to return home. The stars would be in their most advantageous conjunction in only a few days.

Yesterday, while traveling through the forest, Khielgarn was ambushed by a band of orcs that popped out from between the trees on either side of the road. Although badly outnumbered, he used his spells to good effect and was holding his own when a passing centaur, a 3rd-level druid named Anachraeus, heard the battle and came to the wizard's aid. Together, the spellcasters routed the remaining orcs, who scurried away into the forest.

Khielgarn's horse, Star, was slain during the battle, the victim of an orc spear. Faced with a dead horse and a two-day deadline to return home to cast his *find familiar* spell, Khielgarn did what any evil wizard would do: he cast a *feeblemind* spell on his erstwhile companion-at-arms, stripped him of his weapons and equipment, and hooked him up to the wagon. The centaur has spent the day being whipped to faster speeds as he pulled the wagon toward its destination.

Khielgarn: AL CE; AC 9; MV 12; M9; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; S 8, D 14, C 9, I 14, W 12, Ch 7; ML 12; *dagger +1*, horsewhip, *brooch of shielding* (can absorb 63 hp of *magic missile* damage), *ring of protection +1*.

Spells: *affect normal fires, charm person, magic missile, spook; blindness, fool's gold, glitterdust; dispel magic, protection from normal missiles, slow; charm monster, shout.*

Khielgarn cares only about himself and his own desires. He sees magic as the natural way to get what he wants. He is an accomplished rider and driver, proficient with the whip as a weapon. His roofed wagon is just big enough for one person to sleep inside. Besides a cot, the interior currently holds a chest of 2,000 cp (upon which Khielgarn plans to cast *fool's gold* when he gets to the city), his spellbook (containing the spells listed above, as well as *detect magic, find familiar, read magic,* and *feeblemind*), the tome on summoning quasits (for which he paid 2,500 gp),

CENTAUR OF ATTENTION

various foodstuffs, and Anachreus's equipment: a composite bow, a quiver of 10 arrows, a great club (see The *Complete Book of Humanoids*, page 112, or replace with an ordinary club), and a pouch of various dried herbs.

Anachraeus (centaur): AL N; AC 5; MV 18 (9 while pulling wagon); D3 (forest wanderer); hp 18; THAC0 20; Dmg 1–6/1–6 (and by weapon type, when no longer under the effect of the *feeblemind* spell); S 12, D 7, C 12, I 9, W 14, Ch 15; ML 14; XP 420.

The *feeblemind* spell has limited Anachraeus's intellect. He is unable to speak, has no memory of his druidical life, and can only vaguely understand what is said to him. He fully understands that the lash of the whip on his flank means "run faster," and Khielgarn can get him to turn and stop by using the reins, which were modified to fit the centaur's head.

The Mob

As the wagon approached the village, an elven fighter named Miluki recognized the centaur as the forest druid who once saved the young elf's older sister from a band of hobgoblins. Knowing full well that Anachraeus would not willingly submit to such bondage, he called out to several nearby villagers. Together they blocked the wagon's passage. Miluki demanded that Anachraeus be released; Khielgarn refused, demanding that the villagers move out of his way.

The shouts have attracted the attention of quite a few of the village's residents, and currently there are 15 0-level humans (plus Miluki) in the mob. The villagers are not armed, but they pick up rocks from the street to use as melee weapons if it comes down to a fight.

Miluki: AL LG; AC 8; MV 12; F3; hp 12; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 14, C 9, I 9, W 11, Ch 10; ML 14; short sword, leather armor.

Miluki feels honor-bound to save the centaur who rescued his sister. He does not fight to the death, realizing that dying will do nothing to help free Anachraeus. If driven off by the wizard, however, Miluki devotes himself to the centaur's freedom, tracking Khielgarn and hiring additional help, if needed. At present, he has 200 gp in a locked box in his room at the village inn.

Villagers (15): AL: LG/LN/NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1/2; Dmg throw rocks for 1d3; ML 10.

The villagers all respect Miluki and stand by him in his defense of the centaur, even though they have never seen Anachraeus before today. (In fact, this is the first time many of them have ever seen a centaur.) It takes each villager one round to find a suitable rock for a weapon. Thus, during each round of combat, only one-half the humans can attack.

Dealing with Khielgarn

If the PCs do nothing to intervene, Khielgarn, sensing the upcoming hostilities, casts *protection from normal missiles* on himself, then uses his horsewhip to try to scatter the mob enough to allow his wagon passage. The villagers are not accomplished fighters, so each time one is attacked, whether by weapon or spell, he must immediately make a successful morale check or flee the scene.

If it seems to be taking too long, Khielgarn casts *glitterdust* or shout in an attempt to disperse the crowd. *Blindness*, *magic missile*, and *charm person* are reserved for individual enemies that are particularly intent upon stopping the wizard (e.g., Miluki or the PCs).

If the PCs join the mob and fight the wizard, they take the chance that some of the villagers will be wounded or killed in the battle. Perhaps the safest way to combat Khielgarn is to convince the villagers to back off and let the wizard go, then catch up to him later, once he's away from the villager and there are no innocent bystanders in the way. Anachraeus moves at a rate of 9 while pulling the wagon, but Khielgarn can use the whip to coax him up to a movement rate of 12. PCs on horseback should have no trouble catching up to the wagon.

Another possibility (although a remote one) is to convince Khielgarn to free the centaur. The only way to accomplish this is to trade Anachraeus for a good draft horse. Even so, this takes quite a bit of persuasion on the part of the PCs, for Khielgarn is very distrustful and expects to be double-crossed once the centaur is unhitched from the wagon. Also, bear in mind that the wizard is familiar with horses and cannot be tricked into accepting a horse of poor quality. The PCs will have to supply the horse, as no one in the village can afford to give one up. (Although the villagers might be willing to sell a horse to the PCs, at a favorable price.) Miluki, unfortunately, has no horse, nor will he think of this solution on his own. His hatred of the wizard's deed has blinded him to non-violent solutions.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs are able to free Anachraeus from the wizard's wagon, he still requires a *heal*, *wish*, or *restoration* spell to regain his intellect. If the PCs are unable to cast any of these spells themselves, they can try to find someone who can (which might become an adventure in itself) or simply turn the centaur over to Miluki's care. Miluki accompanies Anachraeus until he is cured, in any case.

If the PCs see the centaur through his restoration, they will have earned the gratitude not only of Anachraeus but also of his druidic order and his centaur band, once word reaches them. It is possible that at some point in the future, when the PCs need it most, druid or centaur aid will be forthcoming.

Award the PCs Anachraeus' full XP value for saving him from Khielgarn. If they managed to save the villagers from harm, award an additional 200 XP. The DM might wish to have Anachraeus and Miluki join the PCs on a permanent basis, exposing the players to the role-playing experience of having a centaur companion. Who knows? It might even lead to a player deciding to run a humanoid character of his own. Ω

IASC

BY WILLIE WALSH

Something fishy

Artwork by Terry Dykstra
Cartography by Diesel

How could we have our 60th issue without a Willie Walsh adventure?

Willie tells us that "Iasc" was used as a module in his own short Celtic-world campaign, which was based on TSR's Celts Campaign Sourcebook. *"Iasc" was also used as a tournament module at Gaelcon '95 in Dublin, the largest Ireland gaming convention held in Ireland.*

"Iasc" is an AD&D® game adventure for 4–6 PCs of levels 3 or 4. Alignments are assumed to be broadly good. As the likelihood of combat is very high, the PC group should include several warriors. Also helpful are a thief to reconnoiter unexplored areas, and spellcasters to provide offensive, defensive, and healing spells. The PCs should not be overburdened with magical items, or the DM must strengthen the opposition.

"Iasc" is set in a small Celtic kingdom that can be introduced to any medieval-fantasy campaign. The PCs need not be Celts. The scenario includes sidebars with an optional introduction for Celtic characters, as well as Enech awards and other information useful to a DM who wishes to use the *Celts Campaign Sourcebook* (HR3). If the DM prefers a standard AD&D session, he need only use the normal text, ignoring the sidebars and references to Heroic Feats.

For the Dungeon Master

There are many caves beneath the surface of the world. Some lead to pleasant grottos that can be explored by the carefree. Others are shunned for a sinister reputation, and others remain undiscovered — and are filled with unimaginable terrors. One of these caves, lying beneath the hills of the O'Cush *tuath* (kingdom, or tribe), has recently disgorged monsters from the dark bowels of the earth. Now these creatures are free to explore the night of the surface world.

These monsters, deadly kuo-toa, live miles below the fertile valleys of the O'Cush. A small scouting party of these fish-men discovered a cave hidden from the surface by a shallow skin of earth and stones. Breaking through into the chilly springtime air, the monsters decided they would use their discovery for their own ends, rather than communicating it to their masters in the lower depths of the kingdom. In time, of

course, the others in their tribe would discover the conduit; meanwhile, the scouts saw no harm in enjoying the terror and havoc they could spread at their own pleasure. Besides, they could always say that probing the extent of human "livestock" available around the cave was a legitimate reason for the delay in reporting the find.

Enter the PCs

The PCs become involved when members of the O'Cush tuath discover them at the scene of a massacre perpetrated by the kuo-toa. The O'Cush mistakenly assume the PCs are invaders or other enemies. The PCs must prove their innocence to the satisfaction of the O'Cush to prevent an attack on their persons or, perhaps, on their homeland by the vengeful tribe.

The adventure assumes the PCs are strangers to the area and are innocent of any wrong-doing. (Celts campaign characters have other, less harmless reasons for being there — see the sidebar.) Unless the DM has a reason for their presence in the Celts' territory, the PCs can simply be traveling across the O'Cush tuath when trouble breaks out. A possible condition (which can be dropped if necessary) is that they be traveling in springtime, when the events that unfold can be more plausibly explained.

The Season of Cattle Raids

The Celts value cattle as a form of wealth, although they know the value of coins too. Every spring, each tuath tests its warriors' skills and those of its neighbors by mounting raids to steal cattle. The valley the PCs are crossing is just over the border into O'Cush lands, a place of good pastures but also a prime target for raiders. In the valley the O'Cush have built a *crannóg* (pronounced: kron-OGE) — an artificial, fortified island — in a hollow of the land. The herdsmen and some guards responsible for the chieftain's cattle live there. Not far away, the livestock have been set loose to graze. Apart from rudimentary stone markers to delineate one farmer's holding from another's, there are no fences on the fields. Raiders should find it relatively simple to take the cows. Unfortunately, someone has been there first.

Read or paraphrase the following description to introduce the PCs to the

Celts Campaign Introduction

If the DM is using the *Celts Campaign Sourcebook*, the adventure is set in the southwest of the island of Eriu and assumes a pastoral but mountainous terrain, where the normal activities of mankind might be expected to suffer interruption from the sudden appearance of subterranean monsters.

During absences of war in the Celtic world, warriors train by constantly patrolling and probing the borders between tuatha. Seldom do these skirmishes involve more than the occasional single combat when warriors from opposing tribes meet. Even when a *tain* (cattle raid) carries off some cows from a neighbor's fields, there is seldom bloodshed. The strict laws and regulations that warriors must observe provide for severe fines and penalties for overzealous use of the sword or spear in time of peace. The Law recognizing the danger of protracted civil wars in a world where foreign invaders could turn domestic divisions to their own advantage.

It's with considerable surprise and dismay, therefore, that a patrol discovers the scene of a massacre. It makes life all the more hazardous for that patrol when it is inside a neighboring tuath, whose warriors are likely to believe the visitors are the ones responsible for the crime. Celtic player characters can become involved when Mangas Ui Muruchu, their chieftain, sends them on a cattle raid into O'Cush territory.

The following boxed description can introduce Celts Campaign characters to the adventure:

> Spring has come, breaking the grip of frost on the land of the Ui Muruchu. Now is the time when warriors may earn glory and honor in the service of the tribe.
>
> You are assembled in front of the chief's hut one morning to learn where the first cattle raids of the season are to be made. This year, three groups will be sent to different borders, their mission to locate and steal the valuable cattle of the neighboring tribes. When that is done, the warriors must guard against reprisals while protecting the additions to the herds from enemies.
>
> Your group is being sent north to a pocket between the O'Cush lands and the Mac Ronan. Spies have learned that fifty cows and calves have been brought out to graze new grass in a valley a short ride from the border.
>
> Your instructions are to take the cattle from the O'Cush herdsmen with a minimum of bloodshed. Doubtless, the raid will also test the response of the O'Cush to an Ui Muruchu raid, so you expect to be pursued to the border. Once there, it may be necessary to delay any pursuit by single combats at the ford until reinforcements can be sent for and a settlement reached. With luck, it may be possible to take the cattle unhindered, which — while not as exciting as fighting a running battle back to the tuath — will be an honorable feat for any warrior band.

Of course, the raiding party will likely not be composed solely of warriors, though the warrior class is the most desirable in Celtic society. Warriors are expected to perform the actual raiding and fighting; all others are to play a supporting role. Once the real adventure begins, however, the other PCs may find their own talents far more useful than on a typical raid.

The O'Cush are presently returning their herds from winter quarters, near their larger settlements, to the valleys and fields in which they graze at other times of the year. This means that the long borders of the O'Cush tuath cannot be watched everywhere for want of enough men. On the other hand, the O'Cush know that the cattle are prime targets, so they have placed at least some guards on them, with reinforcements camped only a short distance away in case of raiding.

In the event of no raids within a period of three or four weeks, the warriors would return to their other duties, and normal guard-ratios (about three guards to every 50 cattle) would be restored. The likelihood of there being no raids is so remote, however, that most of the O'Cush warriors are now in the field. If this hasn't occurred to the PCs, the DM might like to mention it before their adventurers set out.

Once the adventure begins, Celt PCs follow essentially the same course as non-Celts except for possible Enech point awards (or penalties) given for honorable (or taken for dishonorable) behavior. See the sidebar on page 68 for guidelines on such awards.

scenario. Celts can be introduced using the sidebar introduction.

> The day begins well with the fording of a shallow river into a new and pastoral country. You see far off the signs of small communities, and farther off still the tiny figures of mounted men coming and going across the land.
>
> According to your maps, your path must cross these lands labeled "O'Cush" for the next few days. About midday, however, your journey comes to an abrupt halt. Rounding the edge of a certain hill at the head of a fertile valley, you are shocked to see dozens of carcasses lying about the fields. Many cattle lie dead, while others wander maimed about the land.
>
> At the foot of the valley, in the middle of a small lake, stands some kind of small fortress. There is no sign of human life abroad in the vale, nor does smoke rise from the expected cooking fires in the lake-dwelling.

PCs examining the dead or maimed cattle find the beasts have been wounded by weapons, rather than struck with disease or another natural calamity. It would be kinder to kill the maimed ones rather than leave them to suffer.

PCs familiar with Celtic culture know that wholesale slaughter of cattle is a monstrous crime, if only because of the high value of livestock in the Celtic economy. There is no sign of guards, though the grass is beaten down in places as if a combat took place. A faint odor of rotting fish surrounds the site.

A ranger PC examining the surrounding countryside finds some indeterminable tracks leading southeast toward the mountains. They cross some stony ground and are finally lost about a mile to the east. The tracks lead in the wrong direction to be from the O'Cush tuath. Because the hills are popularly the homes of monsters and Sidhe-folk, (mysterious, elf-like creatures) few low-landers go there without good cause.

The PCs may decide to return immediately the way they came or continue on for fear of being wrongly accused of this slaughter. If they do so, the O'Cush track them and lodge a formal complaint and accusations with the local judiciary, (or with Mangas Ui Muruchu, if Celts PCs are being used), believing them to be the wrong-doers. The party will be obliged to investigate the scene anyway, in an effort to establish the true identities of the raiders.

Should the PCs remain to examine the closed crannog, refer to the appropriate map for the following numbered descriptions:

1. Wooden Bridge. The lake in which the crannog stands is artificial, as is its central island. The wooden bridge connecting the island with the "mainland" stands on pilings driven into the lake-bed. At the farthest end is a closed heavy gate. It is barred on the inside by a heavy plank of wood.

PCs may use the bridge to approach the isle without opposition. The water is 5′ deep nearest the island.

2. The Island. The crannog was constructed by laying down layers of stones and branches until a raft of material emerged from the water. Then soil and sand were added to stabilize the new island. Buildings and the surrounding palisade were added later.

A narrow strip of beach surrounds the palisade. The fence is 15′ high, and PCs may easily clamber over it. There are no guards on the perimeter.

In the sandy soil surrounding the palisade, PCs find tracks made by large, webbed feet. At least 10 creatures emerged from the water to scale the fence, then left using the same route. These prints are of the kuo-toan raiding party, who are responsible for the killings and maimings in the cow pastures. They have left a trail of murder and destruction inside the crannóg.

3. Main Hut. The main hut, which would be used as living quarters for the herdsmen or their guards, is a single room in which all household activities take place. Presently it is dark and the fire has burned almost out.

When the PCs get used to the dim interior, they find it is in disarray. Pots have been upturned, blankets ripped, bags of provisions scattered about. There is also a good deal of blood, and this time a very heavy smell of rotting fish, though no fish are found among the provisions.

Lying among the debris are three human bodies, one woman and two men. One of the men wears the tattoos and lime-washed hair of a local Celtic warrior. His weapons lie on the floor, and all are unbloodied. Whoever killed him evidently wasn't interested in taking his head or other trophies. A savage wound on his chest was evidently the cause of death. There are similar marks on the other victims.

Any warrior who makes an Intelligence check can determine that the weapons that delivered the lethal wounds had a serrated edge, something uncommon (but not unheard of) in local Celtic war gear. In addition, the other male victim, a herdsman, has bruises on his arms above each elbow. No one can tell what caused these. (They were in fact caused by the pincer staff of a kuo-toan priest).

Nothing appears to be stolen. All provisions are intact, but upturned. The gold and silver ornaments worn by the victims are untouched. (They come to a total of 50 gp worth, if PCs feel inclined to loot the corpses). Judging by the ashes of the fire, it's likely the attack occurred no more than 24 hours past.

4 & 5. Cow Byres. These huts have been made to house the cattle in times of severe weather, illness or if other need arises. They are sturdy, but not draftproofed, and they are obviously not for human habitation. More of the webfooted tracks are found in here.

6. Guards' Billet. The exterior of this hut has been decorated with four severed heads, obviously trophies that were taken some time ago. Inside, the furnishings of straw mattresses and simple cooking wares mark it as a hostel or billet for guards. There are five mattresses, all of them ripped and fouled with mud and dirt. Three bodies are here, all as if slain while still in bed asleep. Their accompanying treasures come to 50 gp worth.

7. Well. The water source for the crannog is a natural well, contained in a pool 10′ deep. Two bodies have been stuffed into the well by the kuo-toa raiders. The monsters were careless, however, leaving one survivor.

If the PCs pull the two bodies out of the well, they find that one of the two is still alive. The survivor is a sentry named Fegral. He has been in the water for hours, too weak to pull himself up the side of the well. (In fact, the cold water has probably delayed his demise by slowing his heartbeat.)

Fegral can gasp out only one word before dying, regardless of the herbal or

magical healing the PCs have to offer him. He says the word *iasc* (pronounced EE-esk), and none other.

"Iasc" is an Irish (in this module, a Celtic) word meaning "fish." What this may mean in connection to the webbed footprints, the fishy smell, and the deaths or disappearances of the warriors and herdsmen is for the PCs to ponder. If outlander PCs cannot determine the meaning of the word, the O'Cush they encounter later can offer a translation.

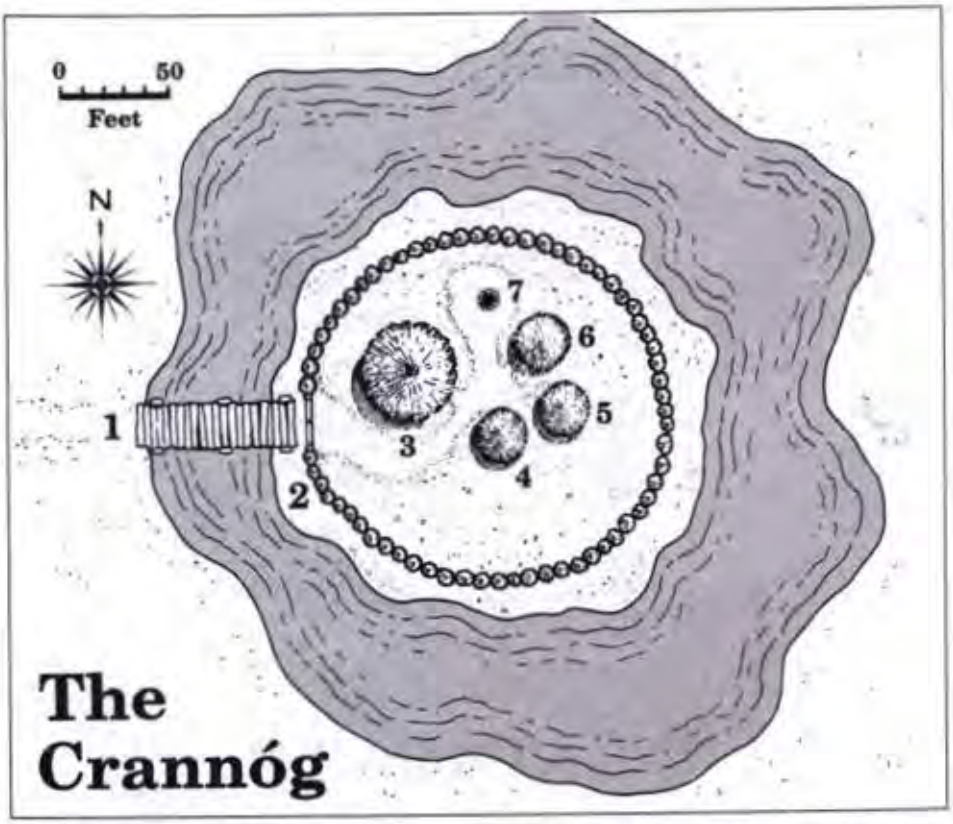
Once the party has found Fegral, there is a cumulative 10% chance per turn that a band of warriors from the O'Cush arrive in the valley to discover their cattle killed or injured, and their friends slain or gone. And the only likely candidates for the post of guilty-as-charged are the PCs.

The O'Cush Arrive

If the O'Cush arrive while the PCs are still in the vicinity, their immediate assumption is that non-Celtic PCs must be bandits and are responsible for the massacre (or that their rivals, the Ui Muruchu, are the perpetrators). The PCs should be aware that the only way to survive the day is to make their side of the story known before combat ensues. They must also show the O'Cush the proofs they have found — the fishy odors, tracks, and so on, as well as repeating the clue uttered by the dying man Fegral.

The sub-chieftain, Oscar, leads the O'Cush band that comes to the valley. He is drawn in a chariot driven by a charioteer. Oscar is a wise leader, but even he is hard put to it to keep his men from attacking the PCs.

If a druid is with the party, regardless of origin, he can ease the tensions by declaring a truce. What happens next is up to the PCs. They may now either insist on fighting a single combat between a champion from their side and one from the O'Cush to win back their freedom (but not their good names), or they may insist on telling their tale and awaiting Oscar's judgment in the matter. Oscar wishes to know what happened to those of his people who died, and also what became of three men who remain unaccounted for at the crannog. (These men, Locimar, Amorgen na mBa, and Turbil Mac Dara Cush, were kidnapped by the kuo-toa and brought back to their lair at area **9**, following).



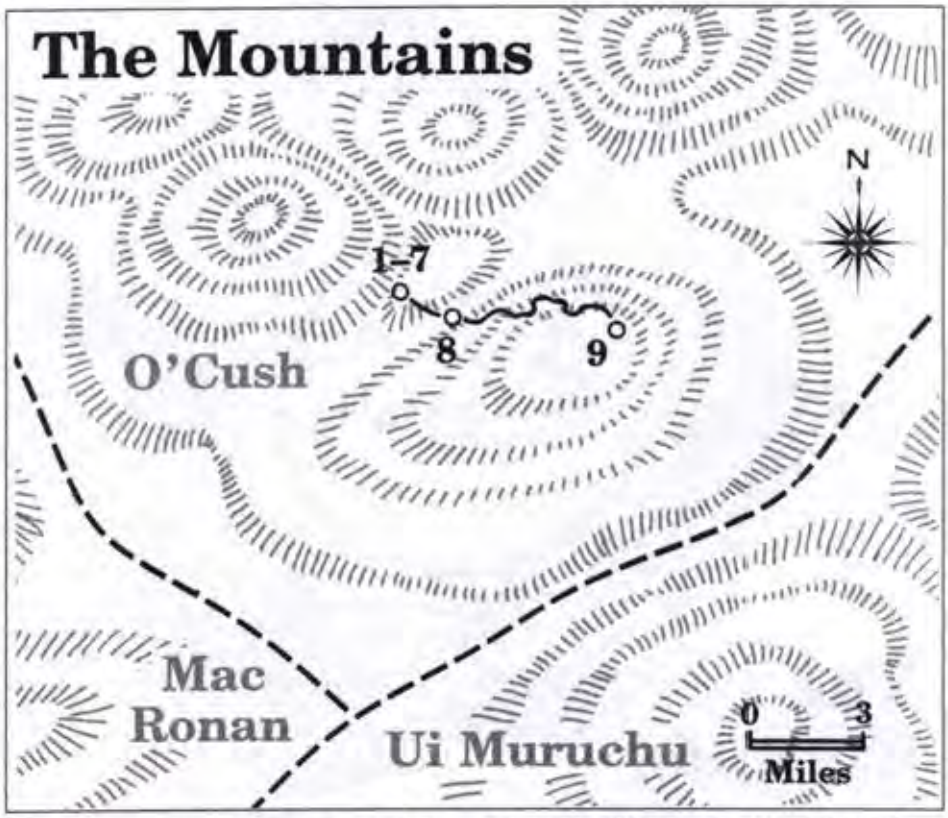
If they choose to fight the O'Cush, PCs should be discouraged from making some kind of heroic but pointless last stand. There are 50 warriors to face the adventurers' handful, and a fight to the finish does not ease suspicions (and may even spark a war between the two tuatha for Celts PCs). Likewise, if they opt for single combat and lose, the survivors are disarmed and taken to An Daingean, the O'Cush capital, where they are tried, found guilty, and put to death. Even if the PCs' champion wins and they are allowed continue safely on their way, it will be believed by the O'Cush that they are the murderers — again not the ideal solution.

The best solution for the PCs is simply to tell the truth. Oscar can be persuaded they are not to blame for the deaths when the proofs are seen. (He is not blind to the real reason for Celts journeying into his homeland if they were cattle-raiding. Had there been a herd of cattle to steal, he is in no doubt Celtic PCs would be halfway back to Ui Muruchu lands with it right now.)

Once the true story is told (whether or not the subject of cattle is mentioned), Oscar considers his verdict. He tells all present that the visitors are not the ones to blame for the murders and damage. He believes that some monsters that must have come down from the mountains are the killers. The bodies of the fallen must be tended to and word sent back to An Daingean about the incident. As the PCs are on hand, and to pay for their trespass into O'Cush lands, they must travel after the raiders and rescue any prisoners that may have been taken. If this is accomplished, or if the PCs destroy all the monsters should no prisoners be left alive, their honor is considered restored in the sight of the O'Cush.

The PCs may argue that they have behaved honorably. Furthermore, unless they are actually taken prisoner, which would mean they get no fair hearing at all, their honor hasn't been dinted. (Nonetheless, in this judgment, Oscar is letting Celts know he is aware of the real reason for their being in the area, and is also giving them an out to pay for the intention of stealing cattle, even if they haven't managed to do so).

The DM should play this section a little differently if the adventurers turned tail as soon as they saw the state of affairs in the valley, or if they had prior warning of the O'Cush arrival



and fled before they were confronted. In this instance, the O'Cush come to the Ui Muruchu tuath to lay their complaint at the door of Mangas himself, or they pursue non-Celtic trespassers to hold an impromptu trial at the next inn or settlement. They can identify individual PCs from items of clothing or weaponry seen from afar. If this is the case, the PCs are compelled to return to the scene of the crime, having given their version of events, and locate the clues that lead them to the same conclusion: they must track the raiders to restore their good names. The O'Cush, believing they know the culprits (the PCs), did not search for tracks or other signs showing the kuo-toa were involved.

Oscar Rua O'Cush: AL NG: AC 5; MV 12; F6; hp 44; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (+1 due to Strength); S 16, D 18, C 15, I 15, W 14, Ch 15; ML 15; XP 420; small round shield, long sword, throwing spear, and dagger. He has learned the Heroic Feat of the Chariot-Jump (Dexterity check, modified by obstacle — see HR3/28).

NWP: charioteering (20), hunting (13), rope use (18), weather sense (13).

Kevin, Art, Mel, Finnin, and **Donadh O'Cush:** AL NG; AC 9; MV 12; F4; hp 43, 33, 18, 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Average abilities (9–12); ML 12; XP 175 each. Each warrior carries a shield and uses a long sword and spear. Personal treasure of jewelry and weapons is in the range 50–200 gp each (5d4×10). The warriors have mastered one Heroic Feat apiece, as follows:

Kevin, Del Chliss; Art, Spear Catch; Mel, Stroke of Precision; Finnin, Warrior's Scream; Donadh, Shield-rim. See *HR3,* pages 28 and 29 for details.

The DM can create names for the rest of the band if any are needed, using the lists shown on *HR3*/24, 25.

Warrior Band (44): AL Various (Good); AC 9; MV 12; F2; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; I 9–12; ML 12; XP 65 each.

The warriors are armed as their fellows listed above, though with only one weapon each. They follow orders given them by the sub-chieftain or his assistants immediately.

The Trail to the Mountain

The trail heads off up the side of the valley from the crannog (areas **1–7**) towards the high mountain-side. The mountain is lightly wooded, but visibility is good in both directions.

Normal movement rates are used to scale the mountain, rather than Mountaineering proficiencies. The mountain is clothed in clay-like soil up to the last contour, some 1,000′ above sea level. This is covered in rocky scree and is also where the kuo-toa have holed up.

8. Dropped Bracelet. The trail passes over a metal object the PCs see glinting in the sunlight. This turns out to be a silver bracelet, decorated in motifs commonly found among the O'Cush warriors.

The bracelet was discarded by one of three prisoners the raiding party took with them from their attack on the valley, hoping that someone might see it and pursue the trail.

The bracelet is worth 30 gp. Ideally it should be returned to its owner or his next of kin, but non-Celtic adventurers are under no obligation to do so.

9. Trail's End. The tracks end at a stack of ineptly piled branches and stones forming a screen to mask the entrance to a cave. Ygleoup, the kuo-toan guard on the other side is not worried that the "weak and ineffectual" surface-dwellers can threaten the cave. He sits with his back against the north wall of the cave, rarely looking out. Any reasonable attempt to creep up on the entrance and surprise him should be checked normally — making this kuo-toan's surprise roll 1–3 on 1d10, instead of his species' 1 on d10.

Noise of combat, unless silenced, travels down the corridor to areas **9B, 9E,** and **9F.**

If the party allows Ygleoup to escape, he alerts the other kuo-toa to the arrival of trouble.

The caves are a natural formation caused by limestone dissolved in the water percolating through the mountain. The interior is wet and somewhat slick, but it imposes no penalties on surface dwellers unless stated. The interior is dark.

Note that kuo-toa suffer –1 penalty to their attack rolls in daylight or within the area of light spells.

Ygleoup (kuo-toan): INT high; AL NE (chaotic tendencies); AC 4; MV 9, swim 18; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 2 ; Dmg 2–5 and/or by weapon; SA

+1 to attack and damage with weapon due to high strength; Fighting with a dagger only, kuo-toa can also bite for 1d4+1 hp damage; SD surprised only on a 1 on d10; slippery skin (only 25% chance of grappling, grasping, tying, or *web* spells); immune to poison, paralysis, illusions and spells affecting only humanoids; spot moving invisible, astral, or ethereal objects; infravision to 60'; sense vibrations up to 10 yards distance; half damage or none from electrical attacks if save is successful; *magic missiles* inflict 1 hp damage per hit; adhesive shield (25% chance of weapon attacking from the front of sticking to shield; roll Open Doors to free); SZ M (5' tall); ML 13; XP 175; *MM*/215.

Ygleoup fights with a stabbing spear and a shield. His dagger is worn in his belt. When initially encountered, the kuo-toan warrior is a pale gray with an undertone of lemon yellow. He pales all over when frightened and darkens when angered.

If the monster is slain, the PCs find his belt is made of the hide of some unknown creature, but it is also studded with emeralds — 20 in all, each worth 15 gp. His fish's head does not make a good trophy, (it quickly rots) but it may be taken to use as proof of the monsters' presence in the area.

9B. Hall of Mirrors. The cave here is narrowed by pillars made of stalagmites and stalactites that have fused together. The minerals that coat them reflect and magnify any light source carried into the cave. All light sources are doubled in area of illumination and intensity of brightness.

The adventurers may be able to use this quirk of nature to blind kuo-toa if they can lure them here. The monsters, who use little artificial illumination, are unaware of the properties of the pillars.

9C. Lost Shrine. This cave was once a shrine to Lugh the Long Handed, the nominal chief of the Celtic Pantheon, and a famous warrior. The small granite idol has been covered with a limestone solution so that it is almost the same color as the surrounding rock now. A druid PC can recognize the shrine, which has not been entered by the kuo-toa. Monsters not natural to the Celtic world are prohibited from entering here, on pain of 1d8 hp loss per round. The prohibition begins where the small corridor to this cave branches out from the main tunnel.

Additionally, any PCs who fight "unnatural" monsters, then enter this shrine and pray to Lugh find that all their weapons have been temporarily endowed with magic. Each weapon becomes +1 to hit and +2 to damage vs. non-native monsters within five miles of the shrine. The effect lasts for 30 days. There is a 5% chance per weapon affected it remains magical thereafter, even against normal enemies, though the bonus to damage falls to +1.

"Unnatural monsters" includes all creatures not usually discovered in Celtic lands, but not demi-human PCs, if these are being used. It does, however, apply to any creatures from other worlds or other planes.

Monsters that appear mostly like humans or normal animals are permitted, but not fish-men, lizard men, undead, etc. (i.e., anything that doesn't appear to be a version of a creature one might expect to find in the "real" world). This still leaves many hostile creatures that may enter — fomorians, leprechauns, wolves, and giant versions of real-life creatures, to name but a few. The DM must use discretion when deciding what may enter the cave.

Non-Celtic adventurers should receive a +100 XP bonus if their weapons remain magical on leaving this cave.

9D. Underground Stream. The floor of the corridor slopes downward the farther west one travels. The sound of running water can be heard up ahead. Entering the cavern, the PCs see an underground stream that enters from the south and exits through the north wall of this cave. The stream flows at a moderate rate; one can wade or swim in it without fear of being swept away at this point.

For each round spent here, there is a 25% non-cumulative chance two kuo-toa enter using the underwater conduit from area **9H**. This chance rises to 100% if the PCs carry a powerful light source (such as a *light* spell) into the cave, where its illumination can penetrate the stream.

The PCs can swim through the stream's tunnel to reach area **9H**. Unless they insist on staying underwater without a magical means of breathing air, they shouldn't need to worry about holding their breath for too long, nor making Constitution checks to avoid drowning.

The statistics for kuo-toa that may be encountered here appear in the description of area **9H**.

9E. Skeletal Remains. (Characters who come to this point can see to and can be seen from area **9F**. The kuo-toan sentry there reacts as soon as intruders come into view).

A niche to the side of the main tunnel contains the almost complete skeleton of a cave bear — a prehistoric monster some 14' long. Though the party cannot tell from the bones, the creature went to sleep one winter 1,000 years before and never woke up. The PCs can see, though, that the remains are very old. The bones are yellowed with age and pitted by chemical reaction with the air of the surrounding cave.

Scraped onto the wall behind the skeleton is a circle containing a spiral (a Celtic religious symbol). It is left here as a sign that a useful item can be discovered in the alcove. Hidden inside the skull of the bear is a *gem of seeing*, wrapped in a small leather purse. It dates from the time of the shrine at area **9C**. Someone must actually lift the skull and examine it to find the hidden magical item, whose power is revealed only when a *detect magic* spell is cast or when someone looks through the gem at an invisible or other hidden object.

9F. Old Cell; New Cell. The tunnel comes to a wall of masonry into which a door has been fitted. A large boulder acts as a bar to anyone passing through the portal. A single kuo-toan guard, named Rocolopp, hides behind the boulder as soon as he sees intruders coming from area **9E**.

Rocolopp is a kuo-toan "whip," a level 3/3 fighter/thief. He has been over-zealous in his demands to report back home about the discovery of the exit to the surface, so he has been given this onerous job to keep him out of the way. He expects to tell his superiors that conduct has been slack and to have some of his companions demoted or executed for slights, whether real or imagined, against the Sea Mother.

Rocolopp imagines conspiracies everywhere, as he is more than a little insane — a trait not uncommon in kuo-toan society. He attempts to use his Hide in Shadows ability to creep up on intruders if he can. If he can surprise the PCs,

especially a group examining area **9E** before approaching his post, he tries to backstab the nearest enemy before attacking the others wholesale.

If the PCs make straight for the door he guards, Rocolopp casts his harpoon at the nearest enemy, then switches to his dagger/bite routine in melee.

Rocolopp guards the door because the room beyond, last inhabited 100 years before by a man who tended the shrine at area **9C,** has been turned into an impromptu prison cell for one of the O'Cush captives. Amorgen Na mBa, a herdsman, is a servant of the O'Cush and expects to be slain at any time. He languishes in the dark and dismal room beyond the door. If released, Amorgen can make his own way down from the mountain to bring word of the PCs' help to the tuath.

Inside the cell is a small bed made of timber lashed together into a frame and covered with an ancient mattress of rushes. Amorgen has cast this onto the floor and used the hard bed instead.

On the floor, the PCs find an old cow hide used as a mat. It radiates a moderate aura of divination magic if checked. Any druid character who meditates while wrapped in the hide receives his spells as if using *incense of meditation.* (See *DMG*/172). The *hide of meditation* can be used up to four times before its magic is exhausted. Its effects remain for 24 hours after use.

Two small boxes, each rotten from dampness, complete the meagre furnishings. They once contained pieces of stick which might have been inscribed with ogham runes, but these too have rotted to a crumbling mess. They cannot be recovered at this late stage. (They once contained druid spells, acting as a scroll.)

Rocolopp (kuo-toan whip): INT high; AL CE; AC 4; MV 9, swim 18; HD 3/3 (Fighter/Thief); hp 13; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2–5 and/or by weapon type; SA as area **9A;** SD as area **9A;** Double damage from surprise backstab; ML 13; SZ M (6' tall); XP 420; *MM*/215, 216.

Thieving Skills: PP 40%; OL 33%; F/RT 30%; MS 27%; HS 20%; HN 15%; CW 87%; RL 0%.

This kuo toan uses a normal harpoon (Dmg 2d4/2d6) and a dagger (1d4/1d3) in combat. When using the dagger, the monster can also bite.

Around Rocolopp's neck is a string of black pearls, worth 120 gp.

Amorgen Na mBa: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 11, C 14, I 10, W 13, Ch 9; ML 10; XP n/a.

Amorgen is unarmed, but he is proficient in the hunting bow (short bow), the spear, and the javelin. He has no non-weapon proficiencies, nor has he learned any heroic feats.

9G. Stream Again. The sound of running water comes from this cave. The cavern itself has a sandy floor, with some purple fungi growing in the darkness. The stream floods periodically, depositing organic material, especially underground species of frog, newt, fish, or moss onto the shelf of the cave floor, providing nutrients for the fungi.

Two of the fungi are less than harmless mushrooms. These two violet fungi are capable of movement and have branch-like appendages that flail out at passing creatures.

The secretion from these 1'-long branches rots flesh in one round unless a successful save vs. poison is rolled or a *cure disease* spell is used. If a character is hit on the arm, for example, that arm rots and withers and becomes useless. It is most likely that the 4'-tall fungi strike a victim on the leg, unless people are crawling about on the floor. Each fungus has 1d4 branches.

The kuo-toa recognize the violet fungi and leave them alone. It is always useful to have some "natural guards" in a cave, they think.

As necromantic magic is unavailable in the world of the Celts, a PC who loses a limb to the touch of these monsters cannot have it regenerated, unless the DM rules that *raise dead, regenerate, reincarnate, restoration,* and *resurrection* have been transferred to the Healing sphere. If this is the case, a druid of at least 14th level must be sought to perform the *regeneration.* It should also cost at least 20,000 gp to pay for the spell, even in a generic AD&D setting.

Regeneration is available in non-Celtic cities to which the PCs may go at a later date. The price is still 20,000 gp.

Violet Fungi (2): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 15, 8; THAC0 17; #AT 1–4; Dmg special; SA special; SZ M (4' high); ML 12; XP 175 each; *MM*/120, 121 (Fungus).

9H. Grisly Feast. This cave has a large, low boulder in it, on which the

PCs see a grisly sight. The dismembered body of a human is being eaten by four kuo-toa sitting casually back to back on the edges of the boulder.

The monsters here are eating the corpse of Turbil Mac Dara Cush, a warrior of the O'Cush tuath taken prisoner in the raid. He was sacrificed to the Sea Mother, Blibdoolpoolp, at area **9J,** his body then handed over to these more powerful warriors as food.

The foursome see any strong light source carried into area **9D,** as the water that runs outside their cave carries the light through. If this occurs, two of them swim to **9D** to investigate, the others alerting Slibdoolplup, at area **9J,** to the arrival of possible trouble.

Squippulipp and **Mopoopbub** (kuo toa): INT high; AL NE; AC 4; MV 9, swim 18; HD 4 ; hp 18, 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2–5 and/or by weapon; SA see area **9A;** SD see area **9A;** SZ M (6' tall); ML 13; XP 175 each; *MM*/215, 216.

Squippulipp and Mopoopbub are armed with a weighted throwing net and a trident each (Dmg 1d6+1/3d4). They each also use a kuo-toan shield.

If a character is hit by a net, he must save vs. paralysis or become entangled. It takes 3 rounds to cut oneself free (reduced by 1 round per helper, to a minimum of 1 round), and only if the victim was holding a sword or dagger at the time of entanglement.

The kuo-toa attack at +2 for any victims who are entangled. Only one man-sized creature can be netted at a time, and entangled victims cannot attack.

Squippulipp has a coral bracelet set in gold worth 100 gp. Mopoopbub's net is weighted with lead balls studded with rubies. There are 10 in all, worth 50 gp (×2), 20 gp (×7) and 10 gp (×1).

Quockock and **Hockpopp** (kuo-toa): Statistics as above except: HD 5; hp 23, 19 (5 HD); THAC0 15; SZ L (8' tall each); XP 270 each.

The higher-level warriors are each armed with a dagger and one of the special kuo-toan harpoons. This wickedly barbed throwing weapon can be hurled to a 30-yard range. It inflicts 2d6 hp damage (before bonuses). Victims must roll a save of 13+ on 1d20 to avoid being snagged by the weapon. Man-sized or smaller beings who fail this saving throw are jerked off their feet and stunned for 1d4 rounds. The kuo-toan then tries to haul in its victim by the stout cord on the harpoon and slay him with a dagger thrust.

A victim stunned and hauled within stabbing range by a kuo-toan suffers the loss of all his remaining hit points. He dies the following round (or falls unconscious, reduced to negative hp if this optional rule is used) unless rescued and magically healed or cured.

Quockock has taken the personal ornaments of Turbil Mac Dara Cush to add to his own treasure. On various parts of his slimy body are a gold torc, worth 95 gp; an electrum armlet, worth 110 gp; and the match of the silver bracelet the PCs found on the climb to the cave, worth 30 gp.

Hockpopp's treasure is a bag of 75 gp; an ivory-handled dagger, carved like a curling wave, worth 150 gp; and an electrum pipe (although tobacco is unknown in the Celtic world) worth 75 gp.

Both kuo-toa also carry packets of dried fungi and kelp, the kuo-toan equivalent of iron rations. The stuff is unpalatable, but harmless, to humans.

9I. Storage Area. The cave here is stacked with sides of recently slaugh-

Enech Adjustments for Celtic PCs

Note that other awards or penalties as described in the *Celts Campaign Sourcebook* also apply.

Celtic characters who took part in the successful eradication of the kuo-toans should receive 10 Enech points apiece—a good reward for saving the tuatha from the attentions of the troublesome fish-men. Reduce this by two points for each monster that escapes.

Here are other awards or penalties that might apply in this adventure:

The Crannóg. Celt PCs killing maimed cattle should receive 5 Enech points each.

3. Main Hut. Looting the corpses subtracts 5 Enech points from each player character involved.

6. Guards' Billet. Looting the corpses subtracts 5 Enech points from each player character involved.

8. Dropped Bracelet. Keeping the bracelet subtracts 1 Enech point from the offending player character.

9C. Lost Shrine. Any character praying to the idol should receive +1 to his Enech point total. Any character whose weapon remains magical on leaving the area of effect should additionally receive a +4 bonus to Enech.

9H. Grisly Feast. Retrieving Tuirbil Mac Dara Cush's treasure from a monster gives no positive Enech adjustment. Voluntarily returning it to Turbil's family will net 3 Enech points each per PC involved.

Ending the Adventure

Once back in Ui Muruchu country, Celtic PCs will face the ridicule of the other warriors for their failure to procure any O'Cush cattle, unless (like the original players of this module) they were cheeky enough to pick up a few on the way home anyway! Ridicule turns to wonder and admiration when the true tale is told.

tered cattle that the kuo-toa stole before they were bold enough to attack the O'Cush settlement. The PCs may be surprised to see the carcasses still bearing skins are branded with the Ui Muruchu mark (or a mark appropriate to the PCs' friends and neighbors, if non-Celtic), proving that the monsters roamed farther afield. It also lets the PCs know they are doing a service for their own homeland, not just one on behalf of the O'Cush, by opposing the kuo-toa.

There is meat enough here to account for three carcasses. Its condition is poor, as it has neither been butchered properly nor stored in sanitary conditions. Any adventurers who scavenge the meat to cook for themselves are inviting food poisoning. Such poisoning incapacitates for 1d4 days, less one day per point of the victim's Constitution above 14.

9J. The Deadly Shrine. This cave is the temporary headquarters of the invaders. It contains a nearly circular, natural depression that is filled with water. The pool is used as a place of repose by the kuo-toan priest Slibdoolplup, the group leader. It is also where the monsters recently drowned the warrior Turbil Mac Dara Cush, whose remains are being eaten at area **9H.** His companion, a herdsman named Locimar, floats face down in the pool. Slibdoolplup watches the body in morbid fascination.

Slibdoolplup has used the sacrifice of Turbil and Locimar to appease his goddess for his group's lack of duty to their tribe. When they had visited the surface world twice and still not reported to their superiors, Slibdoolplup found his spells were not being granted with the same ease as before. The sacrifice has staved off his deity's displeasure for now, and his spells have been returned. He has not yet been back down the swallow hole, however.

Slibdoolplup is an ambitious social climber. It was he who led the scouts up the swallow hole, despite the perils of the 400' drop and the weight of the water falling from the stream above. He hopes that by returning with slaves and booty he can improve his position in his tribe, maybe even becoming a leader of his sect. He is sadly deluded, however, as the longer he stays near the surface the more reluctant he is to return home and face the music for the delays in reporting the finds of the caves and the conduit. Another reason for his reluctance is that he murdered his immediate superior and took command of the scouting group without authority.

There can be no going home for Slibdoolplup.

If given advance warning of the PCs, the priest summons the four kuo-toa at area **9H** to act as his guard, screening him while he prepares his spells. In melee combat, he uses the pincer staff he took from the body of his murdered superior, Loomphilupp, trying either to immobilize opponents for his guards to kill or, if he's alone, to fend off opponents by placing a trapped victim in the way of their attacks.

A pincer staff is a 5'-long pole, topped with a 3'-long claw. If the user scores a hit, the claw closes upon the opponent, making escape impossible. It is 10% probable that both arms are pinned by the claw, and 40% probable that one arm is trapped. If the victim is right handed, the claw traps the left hand 75% of the time. Trapped opponents lose shield and Dexterity bonuses. If the weapon arm is trapped, the victim cannot attack and the Dexterity bonus is lost, but the shield bonus remains.

The staff can be used only to trap enemies with a girth range between an elf and a gnoll.

Slibdoolplup doesn't use one of the adhesive-coated shields the warriors carry. He does, however, still gain the +1 bonuses to hit and damage common to males of his species when using a weapon.

Slibdoolplup (Kuo-Toan Priest): AL CE; AC 4; MV 9, swim 18; HD 5; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2–5 and/or by weapon type; SA see area XX; SD see area XX; SZ M (5' tall); I 15, W 13; ML Elite (13); XP Value 175; *MM*/215.

Slibdoolplup has the following spells: *cause light wounds* (reverse of *cure light wounds*), *cause fear* (reverse of *remove fear*), *curse* (reverse of *bless*), *darkness* (reverse of light); *enthrall* (kuo-toa only), *produce flame, withdraw; continual darkness* (reverse of *continual light*).

In the bottom of the pool is Slibdoolplup's treasure: a gem worth 500 gp; a dagger with an adamantite blade of drow design, worth 200 gp; and 300 gp worth of assorted coins in a leather bag collected in trade in the Underdark.

Slibdoolplup's Spellcasting

If Slibdoolplup gets a chance to prepare spells, he begins by casting *darkness* on

the junction of the three caves, areas **9I, 9J,** and **9K**. The 20'-radius globe obscures the approach to the priest, who begins casting *cause fear* in the next round.

The first person through the darkness is the recipient of *cause fear*. He must save vs spell (add any Wisdom bonus, if applicable) or flee away from Slibdoolplup for 1d4 rounds.

Slibdoolplup uses *produce flame* to fire missiles at adventurers for the next five rounds.

If events conspire to bring about the defeat of the kuo-toa, the next PC Slibdoolplup attacks is the victim of a *continual darkness* (reverse of *continual light*), cast at his face. If the victim fails a save vs. spell, the *continual darkness* takes hold, centered on his head in a 60' radius globe. This spell blacks out nearly the whole section of cavern west of area **9G** (assuming the encounter takes place at **9J,** or thereabouts), and the kuo-toa try to make good their escape along the stream to ambush the PCs as they attempt to leave the caves. If the save succeeds, the *continual darkness* is centered just behind the victim's head, having the same effects as before so long as the victim remains in the area of effect.

9K. Swallow Hole. The stream disappears down a swallow hole at this point, falling down a vertical shaft for 400' to an unknown level. This is the entrance the kuo-toa used to get from their world to the caves.

The DM should hint to PCs that pressing ahead with their explorations would prove very dangerous, unless he is prepared to detail an extensive and long-lived campaign set underground. For one thing, one would need to be a fish (or a kuo-toan) to survive the water for the length of the climb down. Alternatively, the swallow hole may prove to be very unstable, ready to collapse onto the heads of foolish explorers at any moment.

If the DM wishes to continue the adventure deep in the Underdark, he may choose to set the kuo-toan's home in Lake Atrox (see "Shards of the Day," also in this issue).

If the PCs decide it would be best to block kuo-toan access to the caves, they should be allowed to try any reasonable plans. Given the depth of the swallow hole, however, this may prove difficult. Perhaps the pillars at area **9B** could be hauled here to form a blockage, or trees or other debris from the mountainside stuffed down the throat of the swallow hole to block it up.

If the PCs successfully block the swallow hole, a new stream emerges from the mountainside in 1d4 weeks, the water draining off to the lowlands to form a surface river. Whether this destroys the caves in the process is up to the DM to decide, depending on his future plans for the region.

Ending the Adventure

If the kuo-toa are driven out of the caves, they try to ambush the PCs as they in turn leave. Note the penalties these monsters have for fighting in daylight if the sun is up when the PCs exit the caves.

If the kuo-toa are all slain, the PCs' mission is over. They can bring the bodies of Turbil and Locimar home to their families and receive the thanks of the O'Cush. Any trophies to be returned to the O'Cush may be given now. Evidence of the kuo-toa will be displayed and discussed until the PCs are sent on their way.

The PCs should share up to 1,000 XP as a reward for the full destruction of the kuo-toa, at the DM's discretion. Successful role-playing should also net an award, 200–500 XP per character based on each individual's contribution.

Further Adventures

The O'Cush and Ui Muruchu continue to steal cattle from each other for a few more weeks, the occasional fracas breaking out as armed warriors clash. The druids and judges are kept busy reckoning the fines to be levied on each side, until the matter is eventually settled and peace of a sort takes hold once more.

There may be fuel for further adventures in any of the items the PCs recovered from the caves. The kuo-toa themselves may reappear — perhaps another group of scouts is sent to search for their missing companions. Or the party's good deeds and battle prowess may come to the attention of a local Celtic god, who may have plans for his new protogees, or who may follow visitors back into the wider challenges of the outside world. Ω

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character does. If they're at all role-playing, they'll have their PCs act surprised or whatever when the encounter happens.

I also applaud the fact that each module in issue #58 — even the setting-specific ones — is easily inserted into any campaign setting.

I'd caution against using PLANESCAPE® or BIRTHRIGHT® (maybe even DARK SUN®) adventures in future issues. I realize that they probably help sell issues to players of those settings, but they're really of little use to anyone who doesn't use the game settings, as converting them into generic adventures would probably lessen their true usefulness anyway.

Mike Griffith
Wind Gap, PA

I agree about the importance of not letting the players know the climax in advance. We'll try to be more careful with what we say and present in regards to the content of the modules.

Did you think "Seeking Bloodsilver" (a BIRTHRIGHT adventure published in issue #59) fit easily into a conventional AD&D setting? We need to print adventures for people who play BIRTHRIGHT, DARK SUN, and PLANESCAPE, too. If you play exclusively in one of those campaigns, (as some people do), then you'd never have any reason to read DUNGEON Adventures. *Our goal is a magazine that everyone can enjoy. Dollar for dollar, we still think that we give you your best gaming value.*

Kudos for "Curse"

Congratulations on another job well done (issue #59). John Guzzetta's "A Mother's Curse" is one of the best adventures I've seen in a long time, even given the stiff competition. On top of an interesting setting and a compelling story, it's nasty. I like that in a scenario.

Alan Clark
via e-mail

High-level also need apply

I just wanted you to know that there are many gamers and readers of your magazine in Germany.

Is there a trend in *DUNGEON Adventures* toward low-level modules, or is it just me? Now that my PCs are finally gaining some levels, I'd like to challenge them. Thanks to McRey B. Moyer for his excellent letter in issue #58. I underline his points in every way!

Marc Ruenger
via e-mail

You're right, Marc. I have seen a bit of a trend toward lower-level adventures. It's not something we deliberately set out to do. We'll try to stir the mix a bit better, even so.

We just don't get as many good high-level adventures as we'd like — far too many just throw bigger monsters or more orcs at the campaign party. We'd like to see some really good, challenging, high-level adventures. Maybe you'd *like to write one.* Ω

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